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# Illinois Issues

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# VOTE

## BUILDING BLOCS

Successful political campaigns nail down  
the bases, then stack up interest groups. But sometimes  
this construction is a matter of chance



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*Peggy Boyer Long*



## Illinois' U.S. Senate race offers voters a choice and an echo

by Peggy Boyer Long

**A**n echo from the 1964 Republican National Convention has reached Illinois. The state's Republican right controls the party podium; voters face a clear ideological choice in the U.S. Senate race; and, though there is little doubt as to the outcome, the campaign promises to become one of the more fascinating set pieces in Illinois' already-storied past.

It was partly a matter of chance.

Seizing the day, the conservative majority on the Republican State Central Committee decided to import ultra-right talk show host Alan Keyes from Maryland to fill the vacancy that opened on the ballot opposite liberal-leaning Democrat Barack Obama. In the process, they sideswiped the moderates who make up the majority of the state's GOP leadership.

And this brings to mind the 1964 convention.

True, Keyes is no Barry Goldwater. He and the late Arizona senator were both outspoken — and they might have enjoyed firing off a few military-style rounds together, literally and figuratively — but it's likely they would have aimed salvos at one another, too.

They would differ, most obviously, on the social issues that make up today's conservative litmus test. Keyes likens abortion to terrorism. Goldwater

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*I would remind you that  
extremism in the defense  
of liberty is no vice. And let  
me remind you also that  
moderation in the pursuit  
of justice is no virtue.*

**Barry Goldwater  
Republican National  
Convention, 1964**

supported abortion rights. Keyes calls gays selfish hedonists. Goldwater was tolerant: "You don't need to be 'straight' to fight and die for your country. You just need to shoot straight."

Fundamentally, they would disagree about mixing religion and politics. Keyes, a member of what has come to be called the Christian right, believes the states are free under the U.S. Constitution to establish state churches. He also claims he's privy to Jesus' ballot preferences. In his later years, Goldwater pledged to fight religious factions trying to dictate moral convictions to Americans in the name of

conservatism. From the Congressional Record on September 16, 1981: "There is no more powerful ally one can claim in a debate than Jesus Christ, or God, or Allah, or whatever one calls this supreme being. But, like any powerful weapon, the use of God's name on one's behalf should be used sparingly."

He told *Washington Post* reporter Lloyd Grove in 1998, "When you say 'radical right' today, I think of these moneymaking ventures by fellows like Pat Robertson and others who are trying to take the Republican Party, and make a religious organization out of it. If that ever happens, kiss politics goodbye."

Such differences reflect four decades of not-insignificant cultural change within the Republican conservative movement. But, whatever its direction now, that movement was launched, indisputably, by Goldwater, known as "Mr. Conservative," when he allowed his supporters to boo the moderates off the convention stage, then began his uncompromising race for president with the slogan "a choice, not an echo."

That was a turning point in the national Republican Party, a moment, in fact, that formed a leitmotif of the historical commentary from this summer's GOP convention.

Though the nature of conservatism

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has evolved, the *spirit* of the 1964 Republican convention is alive and well — and it arrived in Illinois with a vengeance in August when conservatives sidelined moderates by inviting Keyes to be their candidate for the U.S. Senate.

The Goldwater campaign was trounced at the ballot box in 1964. Yet the truest of true believers seemed more interested in being right, as they saw it, than in winning. In losing, they stockpiled ammunition for a longer and wider war. And, as we know, conservatives solidified their grip on the national Republican Party, moving in the process ever more toward its heart — and, arguably, the nation's. Had he lived long enough, Goldwater might well have come to be known as “Mr. Mainstream,” if not ushered politely off stage.

What are the intentions of Illinois' Republican right?

Listen to Thomas Roeser. A Keyes supporter, he told Associated Press reporter Mike Robinson that Keyes is “going to talk about issues that are of transcendental importance rather than political importance.” Roeser, an activist who operates far to the right of the state GOP, went on to tell Robinson: “I’m convinced he’s going to lose by a landslide, but that’s OK because his campaign is going to be very rewarding in a number of ways.”

In part, Republican strategists, as we point out in this issue, hope Keyes will convince conservative Republican voters — who carry less weight in Illinois general elections — to turn out and support GOP candidates farther down the ticket.

But Roeser may have something grander in mind: an ideological revolution waged with words.

And who’s to say this isn’t another one of those turning points?

The decision to bring Keyes into the mix does carry risks. His ideas, not to mention his style, seem so out of scale with Illinois politics that it’s difficult to imagine he can be of any help to the conservative cause here. In fact, moderate Republicans must be hoping secretly that this gambit will fall so flat conservatives will be forced to fall

back, giving the main GOP column time to regroup after the drubbing they’ve been taking from Democrats and prosecutors.

Then again, perhaps conservatives will, as they have with the national party, inch inward until — well, until they *are* the party.

Illinois, it should be remembered, has been home to a cadre of intellectuals, activists and elected leaders who have, and do, play key roles in shaping the national conservative agenda. Phyllis Schlafly of the Eagle Forum tops the list. As do U.S. Reps. Phil Crane and Henry Hyde, as well as U.S. House Speaker Dennis Hastert. And, of course, Donald Rumsfeld, is helping President George W. Bush advance his war in Iraq.

In Illinois, GOP conservatives have, of necessity, resorted to guerrilla campaigns. This state is mostly moderate politically, despite the social conservatism of its southern region. Illinois has been trending steadily more Democratic, too. And electoral strategists estimate only about 30 percent of Republican primary voters in this state can be counted on to support candidates from the right.

Yet there have been some notable skirmishes — and advances — for the conservative cause in this state. *Illinois Issues* has kept tabs on this political history for some 30 years now, and it’s worth re-reading.

Illinois conservatives have made the most headway on fiscal policies. As an example, they began pushing to limit property taxes in the 1970s. Pressures from the right on the moderate Republican administration of former Gov. Jim Edgar culminated in approval of those limits in the 1990s. But, in reality, it had taken two decades of grassroots efforts by conservative activists.

Donald Totten, the former lawmaker from Hoffman Estates who sponsored the original tax cap proposal, told *Illinois Issues* in 1992 that conservatives should focus on issues first and let the candidacies arise from that platform.

And that may be the real message from 1964. □

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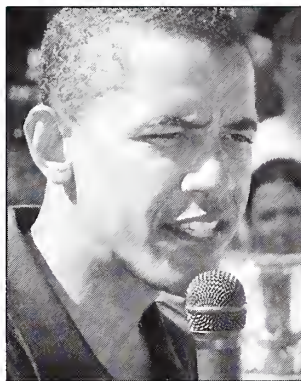
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*Credits: This month's cover was designed by Diana L.C. Nelson.*

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Patrick J. Guinane



## The gap in presidential preference is so slight uncounted votes could decide the contest

by Pat Guinane

As an especially close election enters its final stage, George W. Bush and John Kerry are courting a small but increasingly significant minority: undecided voters. In most polls, they make up about 5 percent of likely voters, comparable to the single-digit gap between the two presidential candidates.

Among registered voters, the margin is so slight the votes that go uncounted this year could decide the contest. In 2000, spoiled ballots accounted for 2 percent of the turnout, as 1.9 million votes went uncounted. Florida, with its 25 electoral votes, became the focus of national frustration when ballot woes held the election hostage for two months.

Unfortunately, a significant body of evidence suggests that actions taken since the 2000 debacle have fallen short of assuring Americans an error-free election day this November 2. The most disconcerting reports come from battleground states that together hold 47 electoral votes: Ohio and, again, Florida.

A Harvard University study published this summer shows that Florida was responsible for nearly 8 percent of the nation's spoiled ballots in 2000.

But the problems were not limited to swing states. Illinois tossed more spoiled ballots than any other state. And the Harvard study shows a disproportional number of uncounted votes in counties with large minority populations, a

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*A significant body of evidence suggests that actions taken since the 2000 election have fallen short of assuring Americans an error-free election day this November 2.*

statistic illustrated by Illinois.

In 2000, this state threw out 190,000 votes, or about 9,000 more than Florida. There was no uproar, though, as Al Gore won Illinois, a Democratic stronghold, by three times the number of spoiled votes.

But in Cook County, where minorities make up nearly half the population, 120,000 votes went uncounted, an error rate of 6 percent. Consequently, the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois filed a lawsuit, alleging that the discrepancies were dramatically higher in precincts with a majority of minority voters. The ACLU won the suit, forcing future ballot reforms, but punch cards will still be used in November. Cook County voters can, however, check for over- or under-votes using ballot

counters implemented in 2002.

Still, there's always room for human error. In the March primary, election judges had their first encounter with provisional ballots, which allow voters who can't verify registration to cast votes, with the validity to be determined later. A *Chicago Sun-Times* analysis showed that 86 percent of Cook County's 9,982 provisional ballots were tossed out, most because they were cast in the wrong precinct or didn't include the necessary paperwork.

Provisional ballots are part of the Help America Vote Act, federal legislation intended to make the butterfly ballot extinct and guard against a repeat of the 2000 election. Intent aside, implementation of the law has been burdensome, as the federal government was slow to appoint an oversight commission and stingy with funding.

Illinois, the state responsible for the most spoiled ballots in 2000, received an exemption allowing punch cards to persist until 2006. But Kerry, a Democrat, is expected to handily defeat the Republican president here in Illinois, placing less emphasis on our potential ballot woes.

Ohio is a different story.

The controversy started last summer, when Walden O'Dell, chief executive of Diebold Inc., penned a fundraising letter informing supporters that he was "committed to helping Ohio deliver its

electoral votes to the president next year.”

Only days later, Ohio Secretary of State Ken Blackwell, a Republican, certified Diebold as one of the firms eligible to sell electronic voting equipment in the state. By the end of 2003, Diebold was the only company offering electronic machines in Ohio. Two private-sector studies commissioned by the state found dozens of security flaws in the software and equipment the firms were offering. Diebold submitted revised specs, but the other three dropped out.

Yet another round of analysis found further security flaws in Diebold's technology. So, this summer, Blackwell halted deployment of Diebold machines, forcing four Ohio counties to return to their old equipment.

Overall, about three-fourths of Ohioans will cast their votes this November on punch cards, the equipment blamed for the 2000 debacle. Ohio threw out 94,000 uncounted votes four years ago, but that drew little attention, as President Bush won the state by nearly twice that margin. The race promises to be tighter this year.

An ABC News/*Washington Post* poll taken prior to the Republican National Convention had Bush and Kerry in a dead heat, with each receiving support from 48 percent of likely voters. The president fares slightly better in a recent Gallup Poll of likely voters, as a two-point post-convention bounce gave him a seven-point lead over Kerry. But Bush's lead drops to one point when the query is limited to registered voters, suggesting that a slight margin of uncounted votes could loom large if the undecided stay home.

In Illinois, even the relatively high 4 percent spoilage rate seen four years ago, would not have changed the state's electoral bent, nor are spoiled ballots likely to loom large this year. Uncounted presidential votes aren't of much national concern in states that are solid blue or unwavering red.

But Florida showed that ballot problems can wreak havoc in a contested state that offers a sizable chunk of the 270 electoral votes a candidate needs to declare victory. Polls show solid support for Bush in 20 states, for a total of 166 electoral votes. Kerry gets the nod in 11 states that add up to 168 electoral votes. That leaves 19 states and 204 electoral votes up for grabs, including 20 in Ohio.

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***Uncounted presidential votes aren't of much national concern in states that are solid blue or unwavering red. But Florida showed that ballot problems can wreak havoc in a contested state that offers a sizable chunk of the 270 electoral votes a candidate needs to declare victory.***

Some observers, among them Gov. Bob Taft, a Republican, have raised the specter of Ohio becoming the Florida of 2004.

Blackwell, the state's top election official, did little to assuage those fears when he sent the Ohio Senate president a recent letter warning that "the possibility of a close election with punch cards as the state's primary voting device, invites a Florida-like calamity."

The potential for hanging chads and other abnormalities that can arise when citizens attempt to puncture perforated paper ballots helped disrupt the election in Florida and led to the extra precaution that now allows Cook County voters to double-check their decisions.

But in Ohio, it was the absence of a paper trail that held back new voting technology. The touchscreen machines that Diebold offered may have resembled ATMs, but they didn't offer citizens a receipt. Conversely, Illinois law mandates a paper trail, which is why the state probably won't see touchscreen devices until 2006. Instead, more than half of Illinois jurisdictions will use optical scan equipment in November. Those voters will fill in ovals on paper ballots and can then check their ballots with scanners.

Some Florida counties have made the switch to touchscreen devices, but not without complications or controversy.

Miami-Dade County used the machines for the 2002 gubernatorial primary. But when a good-government group asked for

the electronic records from that race, they were told the data no longer exists.

Officials said computer crashes last year wiped out those records, though they say existing election records are now backed up on a daily basis.

Citizens also are challenging a state regulation that rules out manual recounts for the 15 counties where trails are paperless because touchscreen devices are in place. Florida law says a recount can only be used to determine voter intent. Since touchscreen devices don't allow a citizen to over-vote and they remind those who miss a contest, the state ruled that the machines are infallible when it comes to voter intent. The rest of the state uses optical scan technology, which would provide paper ballots should the need for a recount arise.

While the technology is new, it's too early to say whether Florida can avoid the errors of four years ago. The state is off to a rough start. Florida officials scrapped a list of nearly 48,000 felons who were to be denied ballots this year after reporters found countless flaws. The same problem was discovered after the 2000 election, when an error-plagued list kept some citizens with clean records away from the polls.

Another unsettling story comes out of Jacksonville, Fla., where participants in a June naturalization ceremony say they were immediately encouraged to enjoy one of their newfound freedoms by registering to vote. The catch: The registration forms available had allegedly already been marked Republican.

Democrats there said they found evidence that at least 23 registration forms were premarked. That may not sound like much, but President Bush won Florida by only 573 votes four years ago.

Along the same lines, the 2 percent national ballot spoilage rate of 2000 may not seem substantial, but Florida tossed out 300 times as many votes as the president's margin of victory.

This year, election watchers will indeed have their eyes on the Sunshine State, and the Buckeye State, hoping the spoils don't determine the victor. □

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# BRIEFLY

Photograph by Bob Ladendorf



*The face of downtown Springfield is altered appreciably by the addition of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. The museum portion, at left, won't open its doors to the public until spring.*

## PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY OPENS ITS DOORS AT LAST

### **A conversation with Richard Norton Smith**

*The library portion of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is at last open for business in Springfield.*

*In recognition of that event, WUIS/WIPA public radio at the University of Illinois at Springfield aired a multipart discussion between that station's Springfield bureau chief, Kavitha Cardoza, and Richard Norton Smith, director of the library and museum.*

*The pair also discussed the status of the museum, which is now scheduled to open its doors to the public in the spring. Smith took Cardoza on a tour of the museum site, about which he said, "This is not a shrine. This is not an uncritical treatment of Abraham Lincoln." He also said he doesn't mind the term "Disney" being connected to the project. "I think any good history engages a reader, a viewer, a participant, a visitor on more than one level. In a nutshell, we're using 21st century technology to recreate the*

*19th century in a way that will be credible and memorable."*

*This is an edited version of that conversation.*

***Q. You've been quoted as saying the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum will be larger, more ambitious and more imaginative than anything else in the public library system. What makes this different?***

In the federal system, the presidential library system, basically, limited resources tend to be disproportionately invested in the library, not in the museum. There's a culture at the national archives that looks upon museums, quite frankly, as afterthoughts, and that imbalance has been corrected here. So without in any way slighting the library function, the fact is that we're creating a museum here

that is much larger, that is vastly more imaginative, interactive, immersive, participatory, and much more sophisticated in the way that it tells the Lincoln story. And then I think on top of that, you've got all kinds of related programs. Temporary exhibits, conferences, speaker series, community and educational outreach film festivals, you name it.

***Q. There have been several delays in the opening of the library.***

Well, I could answer that question two ways. I could be politic or I could be honest. Why don't I try a little bit of both? The fact of the matter is, and this is absolutely true, this is such an enormous project. It is so complex. One theater alone involves what is called holographic technology. It tells a story literally where you project images on thin air. Three-dimensional figures will appear out

of nowhere. That is an incredibly sophisticated roomful of gadgetry and nothing can be done until it is what the exhibit people call “a dust-free environment.” So it adds an extra demand. And when you multiply that by 46,000 square feet of temporary exhibits, a lot of the delays become understandable. Now, it is also true — I was not around here — but several years ago at the inception of this project, I think it is safe to say, there were people who put construction drawings out on the street before they were ready and they have led to delays and they have led to cost overruns. Do I wish there were none? Absolutely. Are we doing our best to correct past mistakes? Absolutely. The bottom line is, from the day this opens, will people overlook those? I think they will because the museum in particular will have such a “wow” factor to it.

**Q. One of the things that happened last year was the University of Illinois at Springfield renamed its Abraham Lincoln Presidential Center for Governmental Studies the Center for State Policy and Leadership to avoid confusion with marketing and fundraising. Do you see a role for the university, and, if so, what is it?**

It seems to me this is an institution that reflects the entire state of Illinois and what I’d like to do is to create perhaps an academic advisory group that would reflect the full riches of this state, including certainly UIS, but not exclusive to UIS.

And let’s not forget we’re coming up on the Lincoln bicentenary in 2009. I have proposed instead of doing the traditional costume ball in the state Capitol and the monograph that nobody reads, to be blunt, in one week in 2009, let’s take a much broader, much more imaginative, much more ambitious approach. Let’s take 10 years from the 140th to the 150th anniversary of the president’s death, incorporating the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War and the Lincoln-Douglas debates, the centenary of the Springfield race riots —

that is a very important event that gave birth to the NAACP. Let’s invite the NAACP to this centenary event here in Springfield. That begins to hint at the contemporary side of this institution.

**Q. Is that what you refer to as the decade of Lincoln?**

I’ve referred to it as the years of Abraham Lincoln. And this would be statewide, but obviously the focus, and indeed the worldwide focus, would be on Illinois and on Springfield. You know this is the state capital and our holdings are incredibly rich. Almost all the governor’s papers are here. I’d like to do a program called “Evenings to Remember,” where you get the Dan Rostenkowskis or the Jesse Jacksons or the Jim Thompsons to come to Springfield and sit on the stage — sort of like *Inside the Actors Studio* — and reminisce and tell the stories that I guarantee do not show up in the textbook, and probably not in the newspaper. The deal that’s cut at 3 in the morning, the ticket that’s balanced behind closed doors. I mean there’s textbook history and there’s the real thing, and we’re interested in both.

**Q. Do you ever worry when you think about Lincoln’s connection and all the tourist sites that are already here that there might be an overdose of Lincoln?**

I go the other way. I think until now there has not been anywhere a single place where visitors could come and experience the totality of Lincoln’s life. And if anyone in American history deserves this, Abraham Lincoln does. And I think a nation that loses its history suffers from amnesia or worse. It’s so easy to wring your hands, and throw them up in the air, and say, “Oh gosh, we live in a historically illiterate time,” and “It’s not so easy to do something to combat that historical illiteracy.” Here people are rolling up their shirtsleeves and doing something on a scale and with a degree of imagination that has never been equaled.

## TOLL RIDE PRICE HIKES

### But plan would spare prepaid drivers

Gov. Rod Blagojevich has a \$5.3 billion plan to make Illinois toll roads more commuter-friendly at the expense of out-of-staters, truckers and occasional tollway travelers. Toll booths would be replaced by barrier-free electronic I-PASS gates under his “Open Roads for a Faster Future” initiative.

“The technology behind open road tolling may be complex, but the idea is simple: Instead of making drivers slow down or stop to pay a toll, we will remove the toll booths, allow drivers to keep going at full speed, and instead collect tolls electronically,” Blagojevich says.

Drivers without the prepaid toll transponders will be routed away from traffic, where they’ll have to shell out 80 cents, twice the current rate. The toll would remain at 40 cents for I-PASS users. Truckers will have to dig deeper, too, as the \$1.50 toll they’re accustomed to will balloon to \$4.

The Illinois State Toll Highway Authority and Blagojevich say the hikes will cover the cost of the 10-year plan, which is aimed at clearing congestion and reducing travel times for the system’s 1.3 million daily users. They say the plan will give Illinois the first completely “open road” tollway system in the country.

The plan would widen 117 miles of road while rebuilding 90 percent of the 274-mile system with reinforced concrete expected to last 60 years. It allocates \$730 million to extend I-355 south into Will County, where Lemont, Lockport and other suburbs would have to put up \$20 million to help build interchanges. The plan also would provide western access from I-355 to O’Hare International Airport to accommodate expansion of that facility. Not included is funding to expand I-355 farther north. Blagojevich does not need legislative approval, but the toll authority board must accept the plan.

The authority says it studied various rate increases, including one that would raise the passenger car rate to \$1, before deciding to exempt I-PASS users. An I-PASS transponder will still cost \$50 — a \$10 deposit and \$40 in prepaid tolls.

Pat Guinane

## GOVERNOR'S ACTION

*A handful of bills approved during the final weeks of the 93rd General Assembly's spring session made their way across Gov. Rod Blagojevich's desk. Here are some of the state's newest laws.*

### Meth

Many popular cold medicines are no longer over-the-counter remedies in Illinois, as stores now must limit access to products that deliver ephedrine or pseudoephedrine, ingredients used in the production of methamphetamine.

Meth, a highly addictive homemade stimulant, continues to make inroads in Illinois, and, in recent years, lawmakers have created several new charges to increase criminal penalties for manufacturing the drug.

The new cold medicine law, pushed by Attorney General Lisa Madigan, requires that those products be kept behind the counter or under lock and key. Consumers can now purchase only two packages of those medicines at a time.

Retail employees will undergo training to identify potential meth makers and are allowed to withhold sale to suspicious customers. Retailers who don't comply with the new law risk fines.

Gov. Blagojevich also signed legislation creating new felony charges for meth makers who cause a fire or explosion while manufacturing the drug. Offenders face an initial sentence of four to 15 years. The penalty stiffens to 15 to 50 years if the fire or explosion causes injury.

### Sex offenders

The governor signed three new laws placing more stringent oversight on Illinois sex offenders.

The first requires law enforcement to update the address and photograph of a sex offender within 15 days of the offender's sentencing or parole. Sex offenders also must have their photographs updated annually.

If they wish to move outside Illinois, sex offenders now must notify the state 10 days in advance, rather than 10 days after moving. This second new law also requires paroled child murderers to register as sex offenders for life. Existing

law only mandated registration for murders committed after 1996.

The third new law bars sex offenders from contact with any person specified by a court and requires that offenders submit to all required evaluation and treatment programs. Further, it allows the state to establish fees for treatment or monitoring under a payment plan.

All three measures were promoted by Attorney General Lisa Madigan. The reporting requirements bolster the state sex offender registry, which is available at: [www.isp.state.il.us/sor/frames.htm](http://www.isp.state.il.us/sor/frames.htm)

### Public records

Gov. Blagojevich vetoed legislation that would have given citizens only 60 days to pursue legal action when a government body denies a request for information. Existing law does not impose a time limit on lawsuits brought by individuals whose queries are rejected under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act.

The governor also signed legislation requiring all public bodies to keep written minutes of all closed-door meetings. The new law, effective January 1, also states that verbatim records from closed meetings only can be made accessible by court order. This year the state began requiring public bodies to tape-record closed sessions.

### Trucking fees

Truckers will soon get a break from the 36 percent hike in registration fees the Blagojevich Administration levied last year. This summer's prolonged budget stalemate helped the industry leverage a rollback that will lower the average annual fee from \$1,000 to \$600. It goes to \$400 in 2006. The legislation also makes it easier for truckers to receive a tax exemption for interstate trips.

The widely unpopular fee increase was expected to raise \$92 million last fiscal year, but interstate truck registrations decreased by 10 percent. The legislation also inadvertently created a loophole that allowed Illinoisans to purchase large trucks and luxury SUVs without paying sales tax, which cost the state more than \$20 million. That error is corrected by the

new law lowering the truck fees, which takes effect in January.

### State property

Although it will have to forgo annual rent checks of \$1, the state can now sell Zeller Mental Health Center in Peoria to the current tenant, Illinois Central College. The 250,000-square-foot facility was a 2002 budget casualty, but reopened as the university's third campus.

A February audit found that state agencies were paying \$2.4 million to rent considerably less square footage in the Peoria area while the university took advantage of a 20-year \$1 annual lease agreement. The audit cited Zeller among several examples of gross mismanagement of state property. Around the same time, the Blagojevich Administration awarded a consortium of private firms \$24.9 million to evaluate state property management practices.

The legislation allows the state to sell Zeller to the college for at least \$10.6 million, the property's 2002 appraised value. If the deal goes through, \$1.2 million must be deposited into a fund that reimburses law enforcement agencies for costs associated with transporting mental health patients.

### Work-zone speeding

Construction-zone speeders must now cough up nearly twice as much in fines, and cops can use cameras to catch them, under a pair of new laws. The minimum fine jumped from \$200 to \$375 while a second offense now costs \$1,000. A portion of the higher fines will pay off-duty troopers to monitor construction zones. Officers also can set up cameras to catch motorists speeding while construction crews are present.

### Volunteer firefighters

Volunteer firefighters won't lose their day jobs when duty makes them late for work. The new Volunteer Firefighter Job Protection Act also prohibits employers from firing volunteers who miss work while fighting fire. The new law applies to communities of 3,500 or fewer people.

*Pat Guinane*

## FEDERAL RULE CHANGE

### Nonprofits may have trouble getting loans

Most of the projects aimed at low- and moderate-income neighborhoods are spurred by a 1977 law that requires banks to seek out investments in and make loans to poor communities. However, a rule change pushed by President George W. Bush's administration that likely will become final this month could take away an incentive for banks to continue making business decisions that help low-income people.

And that may affect the work of the Illinois Facilities Fund, itself a nonprofit that makes below-market loans to "needy and worthwhile" third parties.

"Our ability to do what we do is dependent on the [Community Reinvestment Act] incentive," says Trinita Logue, executive director of the Illinois Facilities Fund. "But I believe most banks will continue to do responsible lending and continue to look for community development partners even if these rules are changed."

Others are less optimistic.

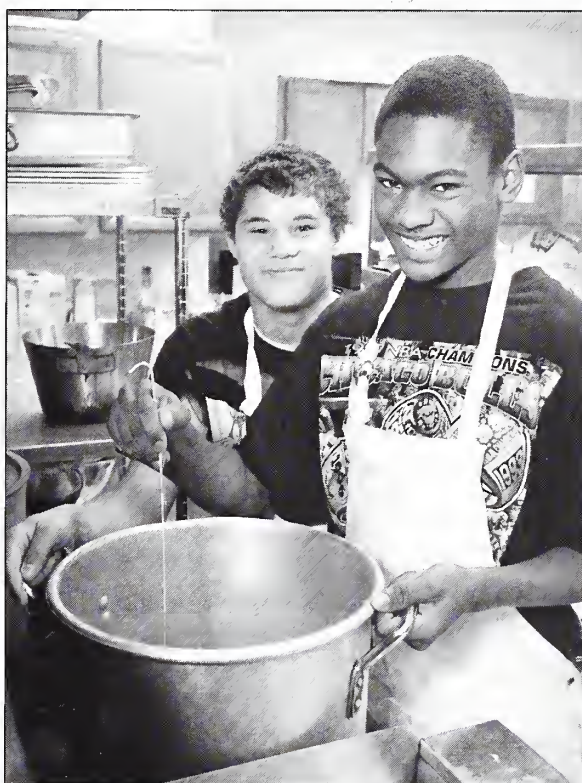
"This [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation rule change] is not a good thing for communities," says Rachel Maleh, spokeswoman for the National Community Reinvestment Coalition, a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group that promotes access to credit, capital and financial services for traditionally underserved communities. The group claims that the new regulation will diminish banks' obligation to invest in their communities. That opinion has been reinforced by more than 30 Democratic U.S. senators, including Richard Durbin.

The FDIC wants to redefine in the Community Reinvestment Act a "small" bank as one that has less than \$1 billion in assets. Previous rules under that act classified banks with less than \$250 million as small. The FDIC, which reviews state-chartered banks not in the Federal Reserve system and oversees the Community Reinvestment Act, previously altered regulations to streamline the bank exam for small banks, relieving some

of the paperwork burden. Banks above that threshold of \$250 million in assets have had to undergo a more demanding performance evaluation that judges the level of lending, investing and services to low- and moderate-income communities.

Seventy-four banks in the state fall under that criteria. If the FDIC rule change takes effect as expected, only 13 banks will be required to follow the stricter lending review.

*Courtesy of the Illinois Facilities Fund*



*Chicago's Sullivan House, which includes a group home for teen boys, was expanded with a loan from the Illinois Facilities Fund.*

The Federal Reserve, which oversees state-chartered large banks that are members of that system, decided this July to keep its \$250 million threshold. It's the first time in history that the four major regulators of banking policy — the Federal Reserve, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency and the Office of Thrift Supervision — have not agreed on a major change in policy, says Robin Coffey, director of community development for Harris Bank in Chicago and chairman of the board for the Illinois Facilities Fund. The thrift supervision office, which oversees savings and loan associations, raised the ceiling to \$1 billion, effective October 1.

Coffey says those banks that fall into that \$250 million to \$1 billion category will no longer be required to seek out community development loans. She agrees with the standard line that a community bank needs the community to thrive. However, "this really has to do with how hard will they work to find things in their community that aren't walking in the door." Coffey adds, "There is not a lot of return to be made on lending to nonprofits or lending to low-income or moderate-income people."

"We think those concerns are misplaced," says Karen Thomas, director of regulatory relations for the Independent Community Bankers of America. She says the demographics of banks have changed, and community banks are under a "crushing regulatory burden." The costs of preparing for a bank exam under the Community Reinvestment Act, says Thomas, more than double when a bank's assets cross the \$250 million threshold. "It's not the investing itself, it's the proving it to the examiners." Thomas says community banks will be able to devote more resources, not less, to community projects with streamlined examinations.

The Illinois Facilities Fund director is taking a wait-and-see approach.

"We just don't know at this point," says Logue. "I don't want to take a crisis position because we just aren't there yet."

Statewide, the fund has completed nearly 450 real estate and loan projects for more than 200 nonprofits in its 14-year history, and its borrowers include day care and senior care centers, homeless and battered women shelters, health care clinics and small hospitals, charter schools and church-sponsored programs for the poor.

"We work very closely with the state because most of our borrowers, like health clinics or child care centers for low-income families, rely on state government for their revenue," says Logue. "We need to do our lending because it's needed all over Illinois. These nonprofits cannot get any other financing."

*Beverley Scobell*

## ONLINE HISTORY

### Law enables research on insured slaves

Robert Moody apparently was a valuable coal miner. His owner paid Nautilus Insurance, precursor to New York Life, \$6.81 to insure the Virginia slave for the year 1847. Policy number 925 lists Robert's name and the surname he shared with his master.

Such details are now public because of a new state law. It puts a face on slavery if only by offering the names of Robert and some 600 other men and women who were bought or sold as implements, then insured as investments. Each is listed by at least first name and policy number, evoking a sense of humanity that history lessons don't often lend to the individual slave. Many of the policies also include surnames and occupations.

Bill distilled turpentine in North Carolina. Camille was a Georgia seamstress, Edmund a Virginia blacksmith and Fanny a "washer and ironer" in Alabama.

"Doesn't it make it much more real?" says state Rep. Monique Davis, the Chicago Democrat who sponsored the legislation requiring the Illinois Department of Insurance to collect the data on slave insurance policies and post it online. "I was a little surprised by my own emotional reaction," she says.

Davis would like a more prominent link to the data made available on the state Web site and says the information could help teach schoolchildren.

California was the first state to require current insurers to make slave insurance policies public. The Illinois Department of Insurance data does not show any insurance policies for Illinois slaves or Illinois slaveholders.

*USA Today* obtained a copy of the life insurance policy written for Robert Moody as part of an article published in February. It shows that Robert's owner paid a one-year premium of \$5.81 along with a \$1 fee. The newspaper also reported that an account book kept by a Nautilus Insurance agent shows slavery policies written in amounts ranging from \$375 to \$600.

See [www.ins.state.il.us/Consumer/SlaveryReporting.nsf/](http://www.ins.state.il.us/Consumer/SlaveryReporting.nsf/)

Pat Guinane

## POVERTY STATS

### Big Latino population may be reason Illinois is hit harder than most states

Illinois is one of just three states where poverty increased and income decreased from 2002 to 2003, according to a recent U.S. Census Bureau report.

The state's poverty rate was 11.8 percent in 2003, compared to 11.2 percent in 2002. The median household income dropped, from \$45,834 in 2002 to \$44,421 in 2003. At the same time, the number of Illinois residents without health insurance, 1.8 million, increased to 14.3 percent of the state's population from 13.9 percent in 2002.

One other statistic in the Census report may offer a reason for Illinois' somber numbers: Nationwide, the Hispanic community saw its median household income drop by 2.6 percent. And though that demographic's poverty rate remained unchanged, at 22.5 percent in 2003, the number of Hispanics in poverty increased from 8.6 million in 2002 to 9.1 million in 2003. Nearly 13 percent of this state's population is Hispanic.

"We're seeing the reflection of lower income, and not surprisingly some higher numbers of Latinos in poverty," says Eric Rodriguez, director of policy analysis for the National Council of La Raza, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit. He says Illinois resembles the picture his group is seeing nationally in the Latino job market.

"Where we saw some growth in the late '90s, that came from Latinos that had more than one job, were working longer hours. Then, in this kind of economy where there's greater contraction, there are fewer hours worked, fewer dual-person families in the workforce."

And a larger problem for that group is lack of health insurance. Nearly half (45 percent) of Hispanics under age 65 and two-thirds (65 percent) of working-age Hispanics with low incomes were uninsured for all or part of the year in 2000, according to a 2003 study by the Commonwealth Fund, a New York-based foundation that researches health and social issues.

Across all ethnic groups, the percentage of those covered by employer-based health insurance dropped to 60.4 percent, the lowest in a decade, from 61.3 percent in 2002, according to the Census Bureau report.

"This is a continuing impact of the recession," says John Bouman, advocacy director and welfare supervisor for the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, a Chicago nonprofit. However, he traces the increase in the poverty rate back to changes in government programs, primarily state welfare programs. "We have a set of programs that are supposed to get people through temporary periods of difficulty, but for a variety of reasons we're operating those programs in a way that a lot of people who need them aren't getting them, and they fall deeper into poverty."

That appears to hold true even as more recent national studies show Hispanics have gained in employment. A June report by the Pew Hispanic Center found that there was a gain in Latino employment during the first quarter of 2004, but that did not translate into higher wages. Real weekly earnings for Latino workers in the first quarter of 2004 were lower than in the first quarter of 2003, according to the center, which is a project of the Southern California Annenberg School for Communication, with support from The Pew Charitable Trusts. "The unemployment rate for native-born Hispanics, particularly for the fast-growing second generation, remains high and shows no indication of dropping," says Roberto Suro, director of the Pew Hispanic Center.

Salvador Diaz, director of Hispanic/Latino Affairs for the Illinois Department of Human Services, says the agency is implementing new policies to help the Latino community by providing such services as language translators and help with filling out forms. He says his office also is working with an advisory group whose members are active in the Latino community. That, he says, gives his office access to "real time" information that will help serve that population. The agency is gathering information to build a database profiling the Hispanic community statewide, something that has not been done before. "We can't meet all their needs until we know who they are."

Beverly Scobell

## REPORTS

### States look to pooling plans to cut drug costs

Gov. Rod Blagojevich's plan to import prescription drugs from the United Kingdom, Canada and Ireland is just one way that states are dealing with drug costs (see *Illinois Issues*, February, page 21). The National Governors' Association recently showcased state efforts to form purchasing pools to increase bargaining power with drug companies. The association brief, "Purchasing Pools for Prescription Drugs: What's Happening and How Do They Work?" spotlights coalitions formed to reduce drug costs through intrastate and interstate pooling.

Georgia's Department of Community Health uses a pharmacy benefits manager to administer state health care plans and negotiate drug costs, which saved the state \$60 million in two years. The RxIS Coalition is a five-state co-op that negotiated drug manufacturer discounts for Delaware, Missouri, New Mexico, West Virginia and Ohio. Savings depend on the program that each state negotiates with a single pharmacy benefits manager.

Based on the premise that pooling creates purchasing power, these coalitions may also increase their powerbase for negotiating better prices and supplemental rebate revenues from pharmaceutical companies, according to the NGA report. This is especially appealing to states that now face a reduced ability to negotiate supplemental rebates due to the new federal prescription drug benefit for Medicare.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT Plans to reach students

Illinois has more local governing bodies than any other state — more than 6,700. Most of the services people use every day are provided by the 102 counties, 1,433 townships, 1,287 municipalities and nearly 3,900 special districts, such as parks or fire protection or waste disposal. Yet students have little opportunity to learn about them.

Local government practitioners have joined with teachers and the University of Illinois Extension Service to produce an eight-module curriculum designed to develop citizens who contribute to their communities. Produced for high school students by the Partnership for Local Government, which includes the Illinois Municipal League, Township Officials of Illinois and the Illinois Association of County Board Members and Commissioners, the lessons cover finances, services, safety, police and court systems, and special districts. This fall, more than 30 teachers are using "Tomorrow's Leaders: Understanding Illinois Local Government."

Beverley Scobell

### Illinois economy more dependent on immigrant workers

A new study released by Chicago's Roosevelt University Institute of Metropolitan Affairs found that Illinois industries became more dependent on immigrant workers in the 1990s. The increase may be attributed to the 200 percent growth in the number of recent Mexican immigrants. In 2000, immigrants made up 14.3 percent of Illinois' labor force (see *Illinois Issues*, October 2001, page 16).

The August report, *Immigrants and Illinois Labor Force: The Potential Impact of Immigration Reform on Illinois Industries*, fuels arguments that strict immigration policies could negatively impact Illinois industries and U.S. labor markets. Foreign-born workers make up 26 percent of the Chicago labor force, 17 percent in suburban areas and 2.8 percent outside of Chicago. Researchers argue that new federal immigration proposals to reduce the number of undocumented workers may hurt the state's human capital.

The Institute of Metropolitan Affairs specializes in studying policy initiatives that impact the Chicago region. Executive director of the institute, James H. Lewis, was one of the authors of the study. "From these findings we can see that changes in immigration laws, including restrictions on undocumented workers, could have varying economic impacts in industries and in occupations in Illinois that are increasingly coming to rely on immigrant workers."

Rikeesha Cannon

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# Star power

While Barack Obama played the role of media darling during the Democratic National Convention, Republican Alan Keyes seems to possess an innate ability to attract headlines. Sound bites are overshadowing substance in the U.S. Senate campaign

Analysis by Pat Guinane

If next month's election turns out the way just about everyone expects, Illinois will send one Harvard-educated African American to Washington, D.C., and another back to Maryland.

In education and race, Barack Obama and Alan Keyes share common backgrounds. But the similarities stop there with these two competitors for the state's open U.S. Senate seat.

Once an obscure state senator, Obama captured a crowded primary contest in March and captivated observers as the keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention in July, about the same time he became an undisputed front-runner. His ascent was aided by that impressive performance on the national stage, but Obama's elevation to almost untouchable status came in part because the state Republican Party was still scrambling to field a challenger.

And so entered Keyes, a candidate who adds new breadth to the term ultra-conservative. After about a half dozen less prominent candidates declined, and GOP leaders failed to draft Mike Ditka, the ex-football coach still beloved among Illinoisans, the state Republican Party bent to the wishes of conservatives and



*Alan Keyes in August announced his decision to accept the Illinois GOP's offer to run as that party's U.S. Senate candidate.*

imported Keyes.

A former Maryland talk show host and twice-failed presidential candidate, Keyes offers firebrand rhetoric driven by deep Roman Catholic beliefs. He replaces Jack Ryan, the GOP primary victor ousted after unsealed divorce records alleged that he took his wife to sex clubs.

The outgrowth of that embarrassing ordeal threatens to further fractionalize an Illinois GOP already encumbered by the ongoing federal corruption scandal of former Gov. George Ryan.

While the Republican Party is flexing muscle in Washington, D.C., and most states, it is anemic in Illinois. So it's not

entirely surprising to see the state GOP put forth a long-shot candidate for one of just eight races that will determine whether Republicans maintain their 51-48 edge in the U.S. Senate. (The chamber has one independent, Vermont Sen. Jim Jeffords, who usually votes with the Democrats.)

While the national party largely has written off Illinois, state operatives expect their Senate candidate to energize the electorate and bolster the bottom of the ticket, namely legislative races

in conservative downstate districts and the heated battle for southern Illinois' open state Supreme Court seat.

Yet Keyes freely espouses opposition to abortion and homosexual relationships, unwavering ideological stances that tend to drown out debate on the economic issues both parties say voters are waiting to hear about. This undue emphasis on social issues has proved an unwelcome distraction for the state Republican Party, and its moderates increasingly respond to Keyes' rhetoric with clenched teeth, if not clenched fists.

"There are some folks, and I don't want to go into names, who did not want me to come in," Keyes says. "They voted

## SENATORIAL DEBATES

*Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Alan Keyes, candidates for U.S. Senate, will face off in three live debates this month.*

**October 12**, Springfield, Old State Capitol. 7:06 p.m. to 7:59 p.m.  
Hosted by the Illinois Radio Network, available on affiliates WBBM-AM in Chicago and WTAX-AM in Springfield.

**October 21**, Chicago. 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Broadcast live on ABC 7 Chicago television.

**October 26**, Chicago. 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Broadcast live on WTTW 11 Chicago television.

against it and were then outvoted. They have been there from the very beginning, kind of sniping and carping and they're the same suspects that are doing it now."

For the Democrats, that sort of baggage was lost on the way to Boston. They spent the balance of the summer bickering over the state budget, but ended the dispute just in time to coalesce at their party's national convention.

Back in Springfield for the traditional State Fair political rally, the Democrats kept to their game face.

"We take nothing for granted," says Gov. Rod Blagojevich. "We work very hard and we've got to put aside whatever squabbles we've had in the past, unify as a family does and get behind our candidates."

For the Illinois Democratic Party, family unity means supporting a Senate candidate some consider almost as liberal as Keyes is conservative.

A state senator since 1997, Obama was especially busy last year. He successfully sponsored legislation requiring police officers to tape criminal interrogations, a feat accomplished only after countless hours spent convincing the state law enforcement lobby to remain neutral,



*U.S. Senate candidate Barack Obama meets and greets supporters at Chicago's African Fest.*

rather than use its considerable clout to kill the bill. Obama also was a driving force behind a new law aimed at curbing racial profiling by requiring officers across Illinois to record the race of motorists they stop.

Both issues would seem to resonate with voters in Obama's 13th state Senate district, a swath of lakefront territory on Chicago's South Side that is primarily home to African Americans.

But the question, until recently, was what sort of reception the Harvard Law School graduate could expect from the rest of Illinois. He got an unsettling preview in 2000 when he took on incumbent U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush of Chicago.

"I was working some precincts outside polling places," Obama recalls. "As these senior citizens would come up to vote, they would all come up to me and shake my hand and pat me on the back and say, 'You know, you seem like a really nice young man. You've got a bright future ahead. We just think it's not quite your turn yet.' I knew at that point that I wasn't going to win the race."

He was decimated by a two-to-one margin. And Rush repaid the younger Democrat's affront by backing millionaire

trader Blair Hull rather than Obama in the primary last March. But neither that endorsement nor the record \$30 million in personal fortune Hull spent could propel him past divorce records alleging he once struck his ex-wife on the shin.

Other competition fell by the wayside, too. Despite winning 81 of the state's 102 counties, Illinois Comptroller Dan Hynes, Chicago's Democratic organization candidate, couldn't compete in the state's population center. This time it was Obama's turn. He dominated in Cook and the collar counties on his way to doubling Hynes' statewide vote total, signaling, at least among Democratic voters, that he's not too far to the left.



## THE BACK STORY: Barack Obama

Barack Obama's story became a best-seller this summer. His prime-time appearance as keynote speaker at the Democratic National Convention sent curious readers scurrying to get a copy of his 1995 memoir *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*.

The buzz prompted a reprinting of the biography in which he discusses growing up as the son of a black father from Kenya and a white mother from Kansas. His parents met as students at the University of Hawaii.

Obama's father eventually returned to Kenya. His mother, Ann Dunham, remarried and moved the family to Indonesia, the homeland of her new husband. Obama returned to Hawaii, where he was raised by his mother's parents.

In his book, Obama discusses his use of marijuana and cocaine during his youth as he struggled with issues of race and personal identity.

When Obama was 21, his father died. He then took his father's first name, Barack, a Swahili derivative of the Arabic word for "blessed."

Obama went on to Columbia University in New York City. In 1983, he arrived in Chicago to become an organizer in the black community on the city's far South Side. He wrote an essay on that experience for *Illinois Issues* (see August & September, 1988, page 40), which was subsequently included as a chapter in *After Alinsky: Community Organizing in Illinois*, published by the magazine in 1990 (see [civic.uis.edu/~Alinsky/AlinskyHomePage.htm](http://civic.uis.edu/~Alinsky/AlinskyHomePage.htm)).

Obama then was accepted by Harvard Law School, where he was the first African American elected president of the *Harvard Law Review*. He graduated in 1991.

Five years later, he was elected to the Illinois Senate from a lakefront district on Chicago's South Side. Obama has served in the state Senate since, though he unsuccessfully challenged incumbent U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush in 2000.

In his current U.S. Senate campaign, Obama, 43, has taken leave from his senior lecturer position at the University of Chicago Law School. He and his wife, Michelle, live in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. They have two young daughters.

Pat Guinane

"When I'm accused of being liberal, really, what's focused on is maybe a handful of votes and in each of those cases I think the position that I took was the right position," Obama says. "Abortion is a good example of an issue in which I respect the differences that exist on both sides of that argument."

Obama, a Christian, supports abortion rights, but says the state should be able to prohibit late-term abortions as long as there is a health exception for the mother.

That stance, according to Keyes, means Obama could not secure the vote of Jesus Christ. This inscrutable declaration followed statements in which Keyes likened abortion to acts of terrorism.

"They involve the same principle, which is disrespect for the claims of innocent human life," he says. "When you kill babies, you are doing something that is especially repugnant to conscience and, obviously, in abortion we are targeting innocent human life."

Such statements show the religious fervor of a candidate who refuses to contort his positions in the court of public opinion. When asked about his opposition to gay marriage, Keyes bluntly explained that a sexual relationship without the possibility of procreation amounts to "selfish hedonism." He would not qualify the answer when asked if it applied to the vice president's gay daughter.

"When I made the statement I wasn't criticizing her or especially talking about her in any way," Keyes says. "We can't say that, because somebody is vice president, Senate candidate or anything else, their children are exempt."

While sincere, those statements have inspired much wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth from the state Republicans who voted Keyes onto the ticket in August. State Sen. Dave Syverson, a Rockford Republican who helped bring Keyes on board, says the party was in a bind after Jack Ryan bowed out and in-state Republicans such as veteran state Sens. Kirk Dillard and Steve Rauschenberger declined.

"It's not like we had Rauschenberger or even Mike Ditka," Syverson says. "People have to remember where we were with less than 90 days to go at the time. We needed someone that had name I.D. and someone who could energize. And certainly Keyes has done that, not necessarily the way we would have liked him to, but he still certainly has done that."

While Keyes' wife and three children remain in Maryland, he has settled into the second-floor apartment of a two-flat in Calumet City, a blue collar Chicago suburb. He says he has yet to find a favorite local restaurant but has frequented the neighborhood White Castle after long days campaigning. His unfamiliarity with certain aspects of Illinois was evident at a Springfield rally, where he repeatedly referred to the state's lower third as "south Illinois" rather than southern Illinois.

But Keyes, who has a Ph.D. in government from Harvard and was an ambassador to the United Nations Economic and Social Council under President Ronald Reagan, says it's his values that will reach across "every line of race, color, creed and party."

"I think the key to victory in this election is, in fact, the majority of believers in the state. And that is actually a very strong majority," Keyes says. "The problem, I think, has been that very often they are lured into an understanding of themselves and their vote and their politics where they don't vote their faith. But I will be appealing to them to do just that, to vote their faith and to remember when they go into the voting booth that that faith is supposed to govern their choices."

At the same time, both sides of the aisle argue that Keyes' preponderance of faith is obscuring other issues.

"He's got to stay on the economic message and get off of the social issues," says Syverson, the Rockford Republican. "Every poll that

we've done, the No. 1 issue is the economy and jobs, by far. The social issues, on every poll this election season, are way at the bottom."

If the debate does shift to economics, voters will learn that Keyes favors replacing the federal income tax with a national sales tax, arguing that government should not get control of their dollars until they decide to spend them.

Obama, like most Democrats, would like to repeal President George W. Bush's tax cuts for the wealthiest citizens. He subscribes to the Democratic position that a cleaner tax code can keep companies from exporting jobs overseas. And Obama says he would reward companies that locate 90 percent of their production and jobs here, invest half of their research budget domestically, pay pensions, offer affordable employee health insurance and limit CEO compensation.

Obama's positions on social issues have not drawn much attention, unless his opponent is on the attack. Keyes accused him of tailoring his message on gay marriage to fit the audience, but Obama says he has consistently supported civil unions and opposed gay marriage while rejecting the need for a constitutional amendment to ban the practice.

At the same time, whether it's gay rights, abortion or his belief that citizens should have the right to carry concealed weapons, Keyes' comments have a way of attracting attention.

In early September, Obama was on the road touting a plan to offer tax cuts to small businesses that provide workers with health insurance. The story was buried when Keyes called a press conference to attack his opponent's position on abortion. He also criticized Obama, who a few days earlier, citing Keyes' negative campaigning, told supporters "I don't want to just win. I want to give this guy who is running against me a spanking." He made the remark while introducing a plan for bankruptcy reform aimed at retired southern Illinois coal miners who risk losing their benefits.

"That got picked up and nobody mentioned the entire conversation that we had about coal miners and pensions, which was a useful lesson for me," Obama says. "I was making a humorous remark in what I think everybody would acknowledge has been an almost entirely positive campaign, both in the primary and into the general, and that was suddenly something that was in the news."

While Obama played the role of media darling during the Democratic National Convention, his opponent seems to possess an innate ability to attract headlines. Keyes says the remnants of his 2000 and 1996 presidential bids provide pre-existing pockets of strong voter support in Illinois. Failing that, Keyes' media courtship could come in handy against an opponent with a huge head start on fundraising.

Keyes has never held elected office, having twice mounted unsuccessful U.S. Senate campaigns from Maryland. Obama has yet to win federal office, the 2000 primary loss to Rep. Rush his only attempt.

One of the two well-educated men will replace U.S. Sen. Peter Fitzgerald, the one-term conservative Republican known for bucking his party's establishment, especially in his effort to thwart expansion of O'Hare International Airport.

Obama is the clear favorite — ahead 41 points in one poll — a signal that the Democratic Party is poised to maintain its dominance of Illinois politics for at least two more years. Keyes is the stand-in, but he's clearly not of the cardboard cutout variety. At the very least, he shows there is a discernable pulse in the conservative arm of the Illinois Republican Party. And if Keyes can turn the attention to economic issues and away from his social views, his campaign may, at least, propel him and his conservative message enough in the polls to send ripples across the



## THE BACK STORY: Alan Keyes

Alan Keyes started out as an "army brat." His father, Allison, served 33 years in the U.S. Army and the family moved every few years, with stops in New York, New Jersey, Georgia, Italy, Virginia and Maryland. Keyes spent his high school years in San Antonio.

He was accepted at Harvard but opted for a Cornell University program that offered a Ph.D. in six years. When he got to Cornell, he decided to slow that pace, spending a year there, then studying under the university's auspices in Paris. Upon returning, Keyes transferred to Harvard, where he would earn undergraduate and doctorate degrees in government.

Keyes was United States ambassador to the United Nations Economic and Social Council under President Ronald Reagan. He later served as assistant secretary of state for international organizations.

In 1989, Keyes became president of Citizens Against Government Waste and, in 1991, he served as interim president of Alabama A&M University in Huntsville.

In 1988, Keyes was Maryland's Republican nominee for U.S. Senate, having been appointed after the primary. He won the Maryland GOP Senate primary in 1992 but again was unsuccessful in the general election. He has twice been a candidate in the presidential primary. In Illinois, he captured less than 4 percent of the Republican vote in 1996 and nearly 9 percent in 2000.

In the 1990s, Keyes published two books, *Masters of the Dream: The Strength and Betrayal of Black America* and *Our Character, Our Future: Reclaiming America's Moral Destiny*.

He hosted the syndicated radio show "America's Wake-Up Call" and in 2002, MSNBC's "Alan Keyes is Making Sense."

Keyes, 54, met his wife, Jocelyn, an Indian American, during his foreign service in Bombay. They have two sons and a daughter. Keyes lives in Maryland, though he is currently renting an apartment in Calumet City.

Pat Guinane

2006 Republican ticket.

# No room for error

The GOP hopes to chip away at Democratic majorities in the legislature. And they're counting on ultra-conservative Alan Keyes to energize some Republican voters without repulsing others

Analysis by Christopher Wills

Illinois Republicans were in a bind. Their Senate candidate had dropped out of the race, and now the party was scrambling to find a replacement or face disaster in a critical election.

Sounds familiar, right? But this wasn't the U.S. Senate race featuring a GOP import from Maryland. Instead, it was a state Senate race in western Illinois. The Republican nominee had decided he didn't have the stomach for a tough campaign against first-term state Sen. John Sullivan of Rushville.

Republicans soon found a solid replacement, but the incident was one more headache for GOP legislative leaders who already have a long list of reasons to reach for the aspirin. Legislative districts were drawn by Democrats. President George W. Bush is basically ignoring Illinois, so he won't be around to energize voters. Carpetbagging U.S. Senate candidate Alan Keyes may excite some conservative voters, but he seems certain to alienate moderates. A recent *Chicago Tribune* poll found that more Illinois voters consider themselves



Kankakee Republican Kay Pangle, state representative candidate in the 79th District, opens her campaign office in Will County.

Democrats today than at any time in the past 15 years.

As if that weren't enough, two untested election strategists are in charge of trying to find some way of electing Republican legislators. Sen. Frank Watson of Greenville and Rep. Tom Cross of Oswego took over as the minority leaders of their respective chambers after the 2002 elections proved so disastrous for Republicans up and down the ticket. They've had nearly two years to plan and prepare, but neither has coordinated multiple legislative campaigns before.

Watson, the more conservative of the two, has followed a combative strategy

in the legislature, not shying away from public clashes with Gov. Rod Blagojevich and Senate President Emil Jones, both Chicago Democrats. Cross has been more aggressive, or at least more visible, on campaign matters. Using the Internet creatively, he has tried to make people forget about the scandals that plagued former Republican Gov. George Ryan and his own predecessor in Republican leadership, Rep. Lee

Daniels of Elmhurst. Ryan faces federal charges of racketeering, tax fraud and lying to the FBI; prosecutors are looking into whether Daniels misused state employees for political work on state time. "We need to quit playing defense, and we need to quit apologizing for the past," Cross said this summer.

Democrats control both chambers of the legislature — 32-26 in the Senate (plus one independent who sides with Democrats) and 66-52 in the House. It would take incredible luck, something in short supply for the Illinois GOP lately, for Republicans to take control of the Senate. House Republicans aren't even

hoping to make that kind of jump. The goal this year is to chip away at those Democratic majorities.

One of the few benefits to Republicans in having a Democratic governor is that lawmakers often take jobs in the administration. That means some entrenched lawmakers have been replaced with newcomers who might be vulnerable, and that's where GOP strategists are focusing their time and money.

Rep. William Grunloh, an Effingham Democrat, was appointed when veteran Charles Hartke left to become state agriculture director. Now Grunloh faces a powerful challenge from farmer and businessman David Reis of Willow Hill, who ran a strong race against the popular Hartke two years ago.

Rep. Careen Gordon, a Coal City Democrat, replaced Mary Kay O'Brien, who became a judge. Republicans are betting on Morris Police Chief Doug Hayse to oust Gordon in a district that, despite O'Brien's past successes, leans Republican.

In a nearby district, Democratic Rep. Lisa Dugan of Bradley took office when Phil Novak was appointed to the Illinois Pollution Control Board. She faces the Kankakee-Iroquois regional education superintendent, Kay Pangle of Kankakee.

Those are the races that Cross says he has the highest hopes of winning in November. But if the political stars align, a few other Democratic incumbents might be vulnerable: Rep. Jack Franks of Woodstock, Rep. Kathleen Ryg of Vernon Hills and Rep. Ricca Slone of Peoria Heights.

Of course, Cross also has to play defense and protect his incumbents. Republican Rep. Elizabeth Coulson of Glenview, in Chicago's prosperous northern suburbs, barely won her race in 2002. Rep. Ruth Munson of Elgin is running in a district that could go either way. Rep. Robert Pritchard of Hinckley, appointed in November after the death of David Wirsing, may have been weakened by a rough primary. Rep. Michael

## NEW INCUMBENTS FACE TOUGH CHALLENGES



*Rep. Lisa Dugan  
Bradley Democrat  
appointed to replace  
Phil Novak*



*Republican Kay Pangle  
Kankakee-Iroquois  
regional superintendent  
from Kankakee*

VS.



*Rep. William Grunloh  
Effingham Democrat  
appointed to replace  
Chuck Hartke*



*Republican David Reis  
farmer and businessman ran  
well against Hartke in 2002  
from Willow Hill*

VS.



*Sen. John Sullivan  
Rushville Democrat  
won upset in 2002 in  
Republican-leaning district*



*Republican  
Tom Erust  
park board member  
from Quincy*

VS.

He has two chief targets: Democrats Gary Forby of Benton and John Sullivan of Rushville. Forby took office last year when Larry Woolard went to work for the Blagojevich Administration. Sullivan, the senator whose first opponent, farmer Gary Speckhart, dropped out, won an upset victory two years ago in a Republican-leaning district.

Another possibility is Sen. Patrick Welch of Peru, the Energizer Bunny of the Illinois Senate. Election after election, Republicans try to stop him, but he just keeps going and going. He got nearly 58 percent of the votes in his district last time around. "This time around the dynamics have changed for Sen. Welch. He is part of the leadership team in the Senate and part of pushing an anti-jobs agenda that has really been dominated by Chicago," says Brian McFadden, Watson's chief of staff. Other longshot targets for the Republicans are Sen. Susan Garrett of Lake Forest and Sen. William Haine of Alton.

Only three Republican-held seats are contested. Democrats think their best shot at knocking someone off is Sen. Pamela Althoff of McHenry.

Legislative races often turn on the small things: constituent services, face-to-face visits, votes on bills of purely local interest.

That doesn't keep strategists and

reporters from looking for statewide issues, however. Tom Cross thinks he's found a couple. "It's all over jobs and Chicago Democrats," he says.

He wants to make sure economic worries are at the forefront of people's minds when they enter the voting booth and that they link those worries to the Chicagoans who dominate Illinois government. Blagojevich, despite massive deficits, has avoided raising sales or income taxes, but he and the Democrat-controlled legislature have raised business taxes and fees while also raising the minimum wage and taking other steps that are costing Illinois jobs — at least, that's the Republican argument. The record-setting overtime legislative

McAuliffe, the only Chicago Republican in the House, is battling Rep. Ralph Capparelli, a Chicago Democrat, in a rare matchup of incumbents.

Cross has used the Internet to raise money and to publicize House campaigns with ads and a Weblog. He saw opportunities to stir up interest — and attach his name to hot topics — by promoting former Bears coach Mike Ditka for the U.S. Senate and backing the University of Illinois' Chief Illiniwek, urging supporters not to "let the Chicago Democrats play politics with the honored symbol."

On the Senate side, Watson needs to pick up four seats to win a majority. That's going to take some doing with only eight Democratic seats up for grabs.

session that resulted from clashes among Democratic leaders also provides ammunition for an anti-Chicago campaign.

Aaron Schock, the Peoria school board president battling incumbent Democrat Ricca Slone for a House seat, raised the issue in an early debate. "I think first and foremost you have to have a lawmaker who will stand up to the Chicago lawmakers ... who will say no to Speaker Michael Madigan," he said.

Tom Ernst, the Quincy park board member who filled the vacancy in the Senate race against Sullivan, has criticized his opponent as a puppet of Chicago Democrats who will vote against the district's needs when ordered to — for instance, supporting a budget proposal that cut funding to Western Illinois University. "My opponent doesn't seem to be able to say no to Emil Jones and Gov. Blagojevich," Ernst says.

Of course, the attack-the-Chicago-Democrats strategy is blunted a bit because Watson and Cross teamed up with Madigan to oppose Jones and Blagojevich and get a budget that made cuts elsewhere. But that's the kind of detail that gets forgotten when election season rolls around.

The strategy also won't work in every district. Elizabeth Coulson says such partisan attacks aren't her style and wouldn't go over well with her suburban district's many independent voters, who are perfectly willing to swing back and forth between Republican and Democratic candidates. Sixty percent of them backed Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, a Republican, two years ago, Coulson says, but only 38 percent supported George W. Bush when he last ran.

Coulson's emphasis over the years has been health care, and she says she intends to focus this fall on that issue — one of growing interest nationally. She will be talking about costly malpractice lawsuits that may be driving doctors out of business, a problem that Republicans, especially in the Senate, championed



*Democratic state Rep. William Grnloh of Effingham, at left, is running to keep the seat he gained after longtime incumbent Chuck Hartke resigned to become director of agriculture.*

during the spring legislative session. Despite a lot of talk from both parties, disputes over whether to cap malpractice damages prevented any compromise from emerging. "It makes everybody look bad that nothing got done," Coulson says. Expect other Republicans to join her in hammering away at the need for action in this area.

A big unknown in the legislative races is the campaign of Alan Keyes. He was recruited to run for the U.S. Senate against Democrat Barack Obama at least partly on the theory that he would ensure the most conservative voters come to the polls and then vote for Republican legislative candidates. "I think that will help us in districts all over the state. I want him in as many of our downstate districts as he's willing to come into," Watson says.

But it's not clear how Keyes can help

in the key state Senate races. Welch's district has been electing a Democrat for years; Sullivan's district repeatedly backed a moderate Republican in Laura Kent Donohue before he ousted her. There's no sign that firebrand conservatives are hiding in those districts, just waiting for the right candidate to come along. Gary Forby's southern Illinois district probably is more conservative on Keyesian positions against abortion, gun control and gay rights, but then so is Forby. A Keyes voter could very well find Forby acceptable, too.

Then there are districts, such as Coulson's House district, where Keyes could be a liability. His rhetoric — labeling the vice president's gay daughter a selfish hedonist, for instance, or equating terrorists and women who get abortions — has already divided party leaders, and it could do the same to voters. Moderate Republicans may stay away from the polls altogether, and independents may decide they want no part of a party that would nominate Keyes. That doesn't sound like a recipe for success at a time when,

according to the *Tribune* poll, 42 percent of Illinois voters now call themselves Democrats and only 29 percent say they are Republicans.

Cross, who says Keyes should be an asset in legislative races, acknowledges voters in some districts may be turned off. But those voters are "sophisticated enough that they don't care who is at the top of the ticket." Essentially, he is betting that Keyes is just enough of a galvanizing figure to energize some Republicans but not enough to repulse others.

That doesn't leave much room for error. But then this election season has never given Cross and Watson room for error. □

*Christopher Wills is the Statehouse bureau chief for the Associated Press.*

# Surprise spotlight

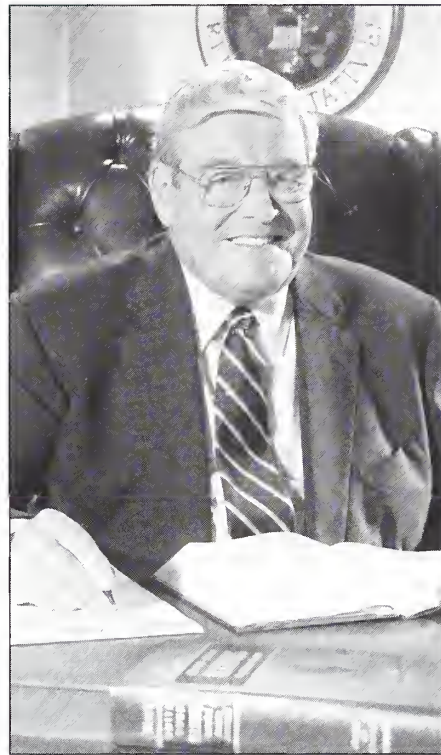
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The 8th District contest quickly evolved into Illinois' most closely watched congressional race

by Eric Krol



Candidate Melissa Bean



U.S. Rep. Philip Crane

By most political measuring sticks, Illinois' 8th District race between the nation's longest-serving U.S. House Republican, Philip Crane, and Democratic upstart Melissa Bean shouldn't be a close one.

The suburban district, which includes parts of northwest Cook, western Lake and eastern McHenry counties, is the state's most heavily Republican, an assessment supported by returns from the 2000 presidential race. George W. Bush lost Illinois by 12 percentage

points, but won Crane's district with 56 percent of the vote. It's hardly an economically struggling swing district, either — it's got the third-highest median income in Illinois. Moreover, Crane, who lives in Wauconda, has been in office 35 years, and the closest he's come to losing was the 56 percent of the vote he collected in 1992.

Yet this contest quickly evolved into Illinois' most closely watched congressional race. Even Crane's fellow Republicans are worried. Rep. Ray

LaHood of Peoria told the Washington, D.C.-based newspaper *Roll Call* over the summer that Crane could well be this year's "November surprise." LaHood, who some political observers see as the man House Speaker Dennis Hastert of Yorkville picks to send messages, since has softened, now saying Crane has turned things around.

Hastert and Cook County GOP Chairman Gary Skoien also have sounded the alarm bell, urging Crane to raise money, get back home and work harder



*U.S. Rep. Philip Crane chose to skip the Republican convention to campaign in his district.*

than he has in the past. "He does need to spend more time back in the district, reconnect with the voters," says Skoien, who quickly adds he thinks Crane will be fine.

The Democrats will have to cross their collective fingers and win such seemingly unlikely contests as this one if they're going to pick up the net gain of 12 seats required to wrest away control of the House from Hastert.

For his part, the 73-year-old Crane is taking nothing for granted in his attempt to win a 19th term, warning Republicans in Palatine Township late last spring that the national Democrats were coming for him. He skipped his party's national convention to campaign, and is relying on his conservative credentials as an opponent of tax increases, abortion rights and gun control — positions he says still match his district's political leanings. "You may not always agree with me," he says, "but you always know where I stand."

The congressman also has been talking up free trade legislation he's pushed through for Chile, Singapore, Australia and Morocco, which he maintains will help expand markets for farmers and businesses. And he's highlighting his push to allow small businesses to join forces to buy health care for their employees.

Bean argues Crane has been standing still far too long. Look no further than the prize she doles out to campaign

donors: a limited-edition stadium cushion emblazoned with the catchphrase, "Crane, the original seat warmer."

The 42-year-old self-employed business consultant and former tech sector manager from tony Barrington, came within 25,000 votes of defeating Crane in 2002. A mother of two, Bean is back and running hard, doling out bags of jelly beans to get folks to remember her name and jabbing at Crane's effectiveness every chance she gets. "The reality is that he's been unable to leverage his experience on behalf of our district," Bean says. "I intend to work hard for all of us in Washington."

The state's 10 Republican and 9 Democratic incumbents worked together during redistricting two years ago to make their seats safe. That removed much of the suspense from all but three other Illinois congressional races.

As in past campaigns, Rock Island Democrat Lane Evans is facing a former TV news anchor in seeking a 12th term in the 17th District, which stretches from the Quad Cities down the Mississippi River into central Illinois.

That race quickly turned controversial as Republican Andrea Lane Zinga of Coal Valley questioned whether Evans' Parkinson's disease makes him physically unfit to continue serving. Evans has turned back Republican challengers in each election, but this is his first campaign in which his affliction has become an issue.

In the Chicago suburbs, two other races have generated some smoke, but the Democrats in those contests have yet to catch fire — or generate much campaign cash.

Fifth-term Republican Rep. Jerry Weller of Morris raised eyebrows in the 11th District when he got engaged to the daughter of a former Guatemalan dictator with a bloody reputation. Weller faces Tari Renner, a McLean County Board member from Bloomington, who has made an issue out of Weller's choice of a partner. But so far Weller has raised far more campaign cash than Renner, collecting nearly \$1 million to Renner's \$200,000.

In DuPage County, 15-term Rep. Henry Hyde is facing the hard-working Rolling Meadows computer consultant Christine Cegelis. For all Cegelis' efforts, so far she's been outmatched in fundraising four-to-one by Hyde, who has collected more than \$400,000.

Hyde, the chairman of the House International Relations Committee, has been recovering for more than a year from major back surgery, so he hasn't been able to work as hard as he has in the past. DuPage Democrats recently made Hyde's health an issue, suggesting he should step down. Cegelis also hopes Democratic inroads in northwest Cook County and a Democratic tide statewide will sweep her along to a huge upset.

Yet that district's veteran conservative war horse remains mostly beloved in



*Melissa Bean plays down her Democratic status as she campaigns in the Republican 8th District.*

GOP-rich DuPage, whereas Crane is at best tepidly embraced in the northwest suburbs. Skoien and outgoing U.S. Sen. Peter Fitzgerald tried to stage a primary coup by running against Crane in 1994, arguing he was ineffective, but they split the anti-Crane vote and watched Crane win again.

The 8th District is used to having Crane as its man in Washington. He's held the seat since 1969, when he won a special election to fill a vacancy after Donald Rumsfeld, now secretary of defense, resigned to take a post in the Nixon Administration. Crane built enough of a national name as a then-young advocate of smaller government and conservative ideals to run for the Republican presidential nomination in 1980, but he lost to Ronald Reagan. Save for the Fitzgerald challenge, Crane pretty much coasted until 2002, when he went through alcohol rehabilitation, overcoming his penchant for Heineken to focus his efforts on becoming chairman of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee. Crane lost out to California U.S. Rep. Bill Thomas, but was given the trade subcommittee chairmanship as consolation, which Crane argues helps Illinois companies looking to export.

Crane also has been taking advantage of his incumbency, bringing in Bush Administration officials to tout federal programs. Crane also benefited from third-party cable TV ads touting his

support of prescription drugs for seniors. On the campaign trail, Crane points out the \$260 million he's brought back to his district in the past two years, most of it to expand Metra commuter rail service and widen a key road in Lake County. "What does this mean to you?" Crane asked a business group in Schaumburg. "You can spend less time in traffic and more time with your family."

For her part, Bean says she'll bring back more to the district, although she isn't saying how she'll get that done.

Fundraising has been going well for the challenger, with Bean collecting \$552,000 through June. That's nearly double what she raised two years ago and she's just \$200,000 shy of Crane's \$770,000 take through the end of June. Bean also recently landed on the national EMILY's List for women candidates and is hoping some out-of-state donors come through.

Although she's a Democrat, Bean rarely brings that up on the campaign trail. She even quotes conservative economist Milton Friedman when needling Crane on spending, calling for unspecified spending cuts to match the tax cuts he has advocated. And Bean's strategists say they hope new Republican U.S. Senate candidate Alan Keyes' incendiary style, coupled with President Bush's expected lackluster showing in Illinois, will sway voters to continue voting Democrat down their ballots.

Ideology hasn't been a focus of the 8th

District race so far, but the differences between Bean and Crane are clear, with both candidates following their respective party positions on gun control, abortion rights, Social Security privatization and medical malpractice lawsuit caps.

Neither candidate is fully polished. At their first debate in August, Crane failed to answer a question on whether students are being tested too much under Bush's No Child Left Behind Act, instead leaving the audience somewhat baffled by talking about his experience teaching 450 students in a political science class at Bradley University. And though the issue of limiting the number of flights at O'Hare International Airport had been in the news the previous week, Bean admitted she didn't know enough to take a stab at a question on whether she supports them.

The surprise spotlight on this race puts more pressure on Crane and Bean to become more polished candidates before November 2. Yet they're each counting on some luck. In the final weeks, Bean waits for a late infusion of cash from the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee that may or may not come as the national party decides whether she can win, while Crane continues to rely on the huge Republican base that's come through for him all these years. □

*Eric Krol is political writer for the Arlington Heights-based Daily Herald.*

# BUILDING BLOCS

*Successful political campaigns nail down the bases, then stack up interest groups. But sometimes this construction is a matter of chance*

Illustrations by Diana L.C. Nelson

## ROCK 'N' POLL *Campaigns vie for young voters*

by Theresa Grimaldi Olsen

Hundreds of students who live in residence halls at Northern Illinois University gathered outside for a barbecue on a warm August afternoon. The hamburgers and hot dogs brought them out to dine, but live rock music

playing in a park between the dorms drew them to voter registration tables.

Students bopped to some three hours of music played by three Chicago-based bands: the Dog and Everything, Lix and Simplistic Urge. About 100 registered to vote, says Donna Dalton, the 21-year-old student who organized this Rock the Vote event.

"It was a good starting point," says Dalton, a junior political science major from Urbana who plans to be president of the United States someday. Dalton also helped register voters this summer at Chicago Rock the Vote concerts that included such groups as the Eagles and Dido. Rock the Vote street teams have been active throughout the country, aiming to register 1 million new voters and get 20 million to the polls in November.

According to U.S. Census data, 15 million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 didn't vote in 2000. And Rock the Vote is one of many nonpartisan groups that are encouraging them to register, vote and become involved in the civic life of their communities. The Democratic and Republican parties also are investing in the youth vote in Illinois, but not with the resources that they are pouring into the swing states.

The appeal of young people was

demonstrated at the Democratic National Convention where 12-year-old Ilana Wexler was invited to speak. The crowd roared when Wexler told Vice President Dick Cheney that he should be put in a time-out for using a four-letter expletive. Wexler, who founded *kidsforkerry.org*, decided not to go to summer camp so she could volunteer in Kerry's office every day.

Among the groups working to energize this potential base is Smack-down Your Vote!, a partnership between World Wrestling Entertainment and the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network. These groups register voters at hip-hop concerts and wrestling events, hold rallies at colleges and high schools and create public service announcements.

Dalton says it's important to reach out to young voters in unconventional ways. "A lot of students don't see themselves as potential voters," she says. College students don't realize they can vote on an absentee ballot when they are living away from home, and they don't plan ahead, she says: "It's not very much of an issue until the day of the election."

Citizens between the ages of 18 and 24 historically are unlikely to vote. During the 2000 presidential election, 36.1 percent of eligible voters between 18 and 24 voted and 50.5 percent of the 25- to 34-year-olds voted, according to



the U.S. Census Bureau. That compares to 60.5 percent of 35- to 44-year-olds and 72.2 percent of 65- to 74-year-olds.

"There seems to be a more direct outreach to get young voters registered," says Brian Brady, executive director of the Mikva Challenge, a nonprofit founded by Abner Mikva, a former U.S. representative and federal judge, and his wife, Zoe, to provide Chicago high schoolers opportunities to participate in the political process. "The question is whether it will translate into more than the 36 percent of youth who voted in 2000."

Brady says for years such groups as the League of Women Voters have worked diligently to register young voters and organize mock elections. "It seems like the number of groups have doubled or tripled," Brady says. "This country has been polarized. Just like [with] Vietnam, the activism level has increased because of the war in Iraq and the issues surrounding it."

Zach Koutsky, an Illinois State University student and College Democrat who has been registering students to vote, agrees students are interested in this election because of the war in Iraq. "The stakes are so much higher in this presidential election," the junior from Naperville says.

High school students also seem motivated, says Jon Schmidt, a member of the Chicago Votes Collaborative, which includes some 12 groups who registered 8,000 voters during rallies in February and May. "I don't know that the country has been as divided as it is right now," Schmidt says.

Through the Chicago Public Schools, Schmidt is charged with helping teens fulfill their service learning requirement of 40 hours of public service to graduate. "We need to spend time to help kids make a connection," Schmidt says. "If they make a connection, they will want to exercise their right to vote."

Kent Redfield, interim director of the Institute for Legislative Studies at the University of Illinois at Springfield, says in a close presidential election, the youth vote could make a difference, but more importantly, the time spent by candidates recruiting young people is

a long-term investment.

That investment is the focus of many of the organizations that promote community involvement. The Mikva Challenge focuses on energizing students to get involved, regardless of their political leanings. The group sent 58 Chicago teenagers to New Hampshire to experience the primary and about 100 teens to Wisconsin in September to observe the campaign in a swing state.

Haamid Johnson began attending debates and events with the Mikva Challenge each Saturday while an underclassman at Hales Franciscan High School, the Catholic school where former Republican U.S. Senate candidate Jack Ryan taught. Haamid eventually worked in the campaigns for President George W. Bush and Ryan. In fact, Haamid introduced Ryan to a cheering crowd as Ryan's primary victory was announced.

Now a sophomore at Georgetown University, Haamid says he was saddened when Ryan resigned from the race. "It was still great to be involved in the political process," says Haamid, who plans on returning to Illinois and running for governor one day.

Brady of the Mikva Challenge says the U.S. Senate race seems to be another factor drawing the youth vote in Illinois. As Ryan attracted the confidence of Haamid Johnson, Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Barack Obama seems to attract passionate young people.

"Obama is such a hot commodity," Brady says. "There is a dynamic he has, a positive popularity in young people. We really haven't had that phenomenon in a long time."

Emily Kasak, a sophomore at Parkland Community College in Champaign who has been walking the neighborhoods registering young people to vote, says they want to be a part of the democratic process but get frustrated when their viewpoints are ignored. "Young people really are interested in politics," she says. "I don't have to do a lot of convincing." □

*Theresa Grimaldi Olsen is a Springfield-based free-lance writer.*



## HEAR ME ROAR *Republicans can't take suburban women for granted*

by Jennifer Halperin

For some, the appearance of "W Stands for Women" posters waving in the stands at the Republican National Convention was a signal that Republicans will need to reach out to women voters.

But in Illinois, this need to connect with female voters has been clear to both parties for years, perhaps most particularly in the suburban counties that ring Chicago. The 2002 election of Susan Garrett, a Lake Forest Democrat, to the 29th District state Senate seat over incumbent GOP state Sen. Kathleen Parker of Northbrook — who eight years earlier had won the seat over then-incumbent Democratic Sen. Grace Mary Stern — showed that districts can swing between parties, and that many of the residents of these traditionally Republican suburbs are independent-minded, sometimes unpredictable voters.

"Previous generations of Republican leaders often took women for granted, not by design but by our intrinsic core relationship with the party," says Terry Hatcher of Yorkville in suburban Kendall County. Hatcher, president

of the Illinois Federation of Republican Women, made clear in her interview with *Illinois Issues* that she was speaking from her personal point of view as a longtime Republican woman rather than as a representative of the organization.

"We were the moms raising more good young Republicans and staffing reliable crews to stamp envelopes. You may have seen us waxing the floor in high heels," she says. "The last few decades have forged a far different relationship. We continue to be the core support group, but some chose other scales of participation. At the local level, you're just as likely to find a woman as an elected official as a man.

"Homemakers are the core base of the Republican strength, but married women who work outside the home might make other choices," Hatcher adds.

The demographics and the partisan makeup of the "collar counties" have been changing as their populations have ballooned. Kendall County was the 10th-fastest growing county in the nation over the previous three years, the U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2003. Suburban Will County ranked 33rd and another "collar county," Kane, was 75th.

People from many backgrounds — from cultural, religious, economic and voting perspectives — are moving in, says Mary Flowers, administrator of the Kendall County Democratic Party, and they are bringing with them diverse points of view. The negative connotations of suburban sprawl, for instance, are becoming important among local voters, an issue that traditionally has helped the Democratic Party.

"Go back to the election of 1992, when [Republican U.S. Senate candidate] Rich Williamson was rejected strongly," says Steve Brown, spokesman for Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan of Chicago, who also chairs the Illinois Democratic Party. "That was the election of the 'soccer mom,' if you will, and that was an election when suburban women started voting more split-ticket. It's a group that is taking more care of aging parents, too." Social issues "are probably in part why you see growth in Democratic officeholders in the suburbs," Brown says.

"Unlike the Republicans, we don't need to do an outreach to women because

women are a constant part of the Democratic coalition," Brown says.

"There's a whole bunch of voters who grew up as Democrats and moved into the suburbs," says Democratic political consultant Eric Adelstein. "Add to that the perception that the Republican Party tends to help the wealthy, and that it's anti-choice [on abortion]," and you see why trends may be changing, he says.

Mark Guethle, chairman of the Kane County Democrats, says his county is expected to deliver 50,000 Democratic votes this fall — a nearly 40 percent increase from the 36,000 Democratic votes it delivered four years ago.

Yet Democrats can't afford to take suburban gains for granted, either. As an article for the Democratic Leadership Council's *Blueprint Magazine* points out, drawing on the book *The Emerging Democratic Majority*, "Democrats made great gains in dynamic elements of the electorate during the 1990s, most notably in upscale suburban families and Hispanics. But these gains are already in danger of receding. Republicans are making substantial inroads among Hispanic voters by appealing to their strong entrepreneurial spirit. And while Democrats were successful during the 1990s at increasing their appeal among suburban women, their appeal among suburban men is notably weaker and shows signs of becoming weaker still."

Sen. Garrett says voters in her highly educated district are very independent-minded, and frequently split their tickets. "Lake Forest, where I am from, is Republican, but I've been able to generate independent and Republican votes based on the fact that voters aren't totally committed to voting for a party, per se. They consider individual issues and candidates.

"Now, all over the collar counties, people want to be able to connect with their legislators," Garrett says. "If someone gives them a reason to leave a party, even for one race, they'll do it." □

*Jennifer Halperin, an Oak Park-based freelance writer, is the former Statehouse bureau chief for Illinois Issues.*

# FREEDOM TO MARRY

## WEDDING BELLS?

*Gay voters have more at stake this year*

by Stephanie Zimmermann

When the discussion turns to politics, Bill Bergfalk and Roland Hansen talk about the sorts of things most Illinoisans care about: the economy, health care, the environment, the war in Iraq. Those issues alone are enough to drive them to the polls this November.

But Bergfalk and Hansen of Chicago's North Side have an additional issue on their minds as the elections for president and U.S. Senate draw closer. The issue of same-sex marriage — or gay civil unions, the term that Bergfalk and Hansen prefer for being less religiously infused — occupies a prominent spot as they consider their options. It's an issue that could push gay and lesbian voters to get out and vote as much as it propels the religious right to cast ballots for conservatives.

Bergfalk already knows President George W. Bush won't get his vote: "He has basically said, 'We don't want you.'"

People who identified themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual made up about 5 percent of voters in recent national elections, according to an analysis of Voters News Service data. In large cities, the gay vote was even higher — an estimated 9 percent of all voters.

Gay and lesbian voters are a core constituency of the Democratic Party, but they can be fiercely independent, too: In 1998, one-third of gay, lesbian and bisexual voters backed Republican congressional candidates, according to the report *Out and Voting II* by the late Robert W. Bailey, a political scientist at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

There isn't one monolithic "gay vote," says Bergfalk, who coordinates special events for the Cook County treasurer's office, and Hansen, a librarian at Columbia College Chicago.

Gays and lesbians come from every racial, ethnic, income, religious and age group, including disaffected young people who might not even care to vote. Within the gay and lesbian community, there's disagreement over how far to push for equal marriage rights and what tactics to employ. And as much as some gay Republicans are feeling betrayed by Bush, some gay Democrats are feeling slighted by their party's politicians, some of whom want their votes but won't go out on a limb for gay rights.

"It's very frustrating when I get the Democratic National Committee weekly mailers asking for money, and I never see 'gay' or 'lesbian' listed anywhere in the top five issues," Bergfalk says.

He and Hansen have consistent Democratic voting records, except for Hansen's lone vote for Republican Gerald Ford in the '70s. They are highly informed about current events. Though neither is the sort to take part in boisterous protests, they strongly believe that it's only fair for committed couples like themselves to receive the same treatment as married heterosexual couples in such matters as taxes, medical benefits and child-rearing.

It was that desire for fairness that led Bergfalk and Hansen, who've been together for more than 20 years, to get married in Canada in June 2003, shortly after an Ontario court ruled that marriage couldn't be limited to heterosexuals. The couple was attending a librarians conference in Toronto when Bergfalk proposed on the spot. "I turned to Roland and said, 'It's legal here. Let's get married.'" And Roland joked, "Where's the diamond?" They were wed before the conference ended.

But though they've enjoyed the support of family and friends, their union isn't legally recognized in Illinois. "There are some serious issues," Hansen says. "If one or the other of us gets sick, and we have to make these decisions about our estate or our property or whether we have to put somebody on a respirator, you want to have that decision-making power if you've been together 20 years."

The couple hopes those disparities will inspire gay and lesbian voters to turn out in high numbers this year. The issue could energize voters in states where a "defense of marriage" initiative is on the ballot. Yet in Illinois, the story could be different.

"Here in Illinois, marriage is not really that high on the list," Bergfalk says. "People are more concerned with the basics — jobs, health care, the war."

Lisa Neff, editor of the weekly *Chicago Free Press*, the largest-circulation gay newspaper in the state, says demonstrations in favor of gay marriage this year in Rock Island and Champaign show the issue has an audience beyond Chicago's liberal lakefront. "It's definitely brought out people to the gay rights movement," Neff says.

Gay and lesbian voters in Illinois tend to lean Democratic, Neff says, but those voters can show independence, as with their support of George Ryan over Democrat Glenn Poshard for governor in 1998. This year's GOP choices are less likely to find backing among gay voters, however. The Illinois GOP's U.S. Senate candidate, Alan Keyes, infuriated gay voters with his statement that gays and lesbians are selfish hedonists. While Democrat John Kerry doesn't support gay marriage, he does support civil unions and other issues important to gay voters, such as federal hate crimes legislation, and generally takes a more liberal stance than Bush, who supports a constitutional amendment banning gay marriage. Bush's positions have angered not only gays but their families and friends, Neff says. "These are families who feel their sons and daughters are under attack." The Log Cabin Republicans, a GOP gay

and lesbian group, last month decided not to make an endorsement in the presidential race, despite having backed Bush in 2000.

Nevertheless, this year the message on gays' political allegiances is mixed. A survey in June 2003 by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force at Gay Pride celebrations in New York City, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., found that 76 percent of gay and lesbian voters planned to vote Democratic for president, compared with only 5 percent for Bush. However, when asked who they liked in the Democratic presidential primary race at that time, 33 percent were for Howard Dean. Only 10 percent wanted Kerry, the third-highest vote-getter after "undecided/no response."

Still, Hansen hopes turnout among gay voters will be high. "I see people getting registered to vote in lots of places. I hope they'll actually do it. I hate hearing people say, 'Well, my vote won't make a difference.' But it does make a difference. Look what happened last time." □

*Stephanie Zimmermann is a reporter for the Chicago Sun-Times.*



# Let it be

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Though the federal welfare law expired two years ago, Congress isn't in a hurry to rewrite it. And that's fine with officials in Illinois

by Edward Felker

While many of the nation's governors are clamoring for Congress to rewrite federal welfare law, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich is not among them.

"We're pleased with the welfare reform law as it's written," says Marva Arnold, an administrator in the Illinois Department of Human Services, which oversees the state's program. She and other Illinois officials would rather continue to operate under the current rules than face new requirements and restrictions favored by President George W. Bush's administration.

They needn't worry. The federal law expired two years ago, but congressional Republicans and Democrats have mostly retreated to opposite sides of the traditional partisan gulf that has always divided debate over welfare. Unable to reauthorize the law, they have instead approved a series of short-term extensions. The seventh such extension was set to expire September 30.

There is some irony in this. Just weeks before the 1996 elections, then-President Bill Clinton signed into law the most radical overhaul of the nation's welfare program since its New Deal beginnings. And in fulfilling his 1992 campaign promise to "end welfare as we know it," he rejected the pleadings, and no votes, of many in his own Democratic Party.

Eight years later, national welfare rolls have shrunk by more than half, to about two million families. In Illinois, the rolls

have dropped from 188,000 cases eight years ago to 39,000 today, encompassing about 97,000 people.

Yet this success has not translated into momentum on Capitol Hill. It hasn't been for lack of trying. Last year, the House approved Bush's welfare reform plan, which raises work requirements for recipients, but the Senate version of that plan stalled in March.

The GOP argument, that too few welfare recipients actually work, and those who do don't work enough, hasn't won support among congressional Democrats — or officials in Springfield.

## *The two worlds of welfare reform in Illinois, July 2004*

Of 967 adults granted welfare assistance in the fall of 1998, combined family earnings and benefits overall climbed from \$7,375 in 1999-2000 to \$14,569 in 2003, according to the fourth annual report out of the Illinois Families Study, a university consortium's research on families moving from welfare to work. The annual report to the state legislature is directed by Northwestern University in Evanston.

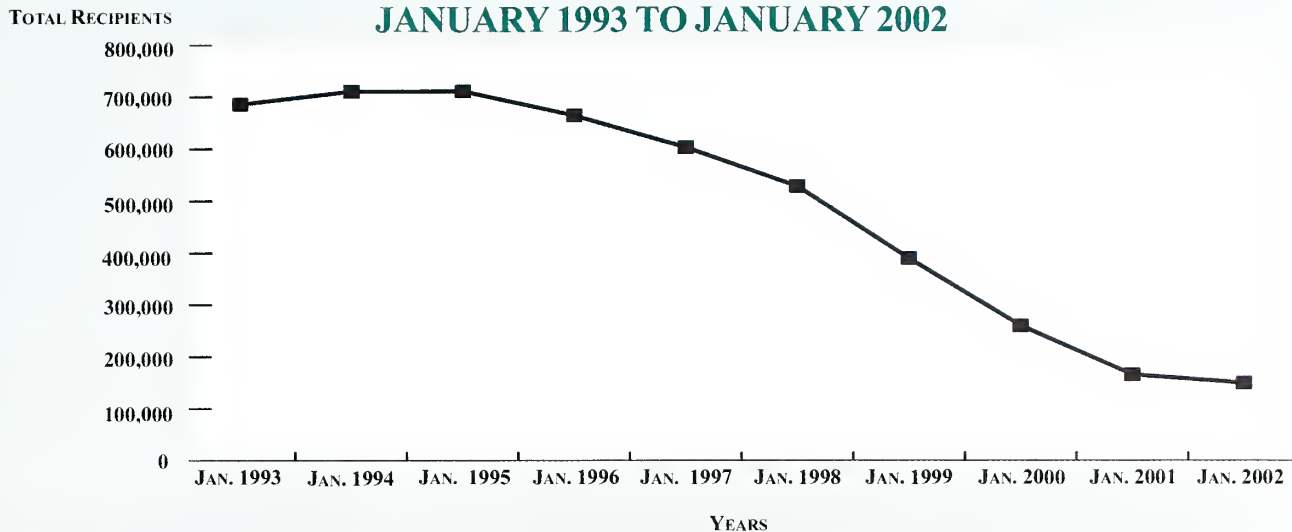
The law's current five-year lifetime limit on cash assistance would not change under the Bush plan, nor would the federal commitment of \$16.5 billion in annual national spending. But the proposal would require recipients to work 40 hours a week, an increase from 30, and there would be less flexibility in the way those hours are counted. Currently, family recipients can meet the requirement through a mix of "countable activities," with at least 20 hours of work. The remainder can be achieved through training, education, or mental health and substance abuse treatment.

"We feel that 30 hours is reasonable," Arnold says. Forty hours, she believes, would represent a "hardship" for recipients.

Other proposed reforms also would pose problems from the state's perspective. To qualify for the \$480 million the state gets in annual federal block grants, it must show that at least half of Illinois' cash recipients are working, though there are performance incentives available that let the state fall below that level. The Bush plan would raise the floor to 70 percent by 2007, with incentives that would let states fall back to the 50 percent level if they meet certain criteria. New rules also would limit the activities that count as work.

The problem, Arnold says, is that those who need cash in the current economy are in desperate need and not always readily employable.

## NUMBER OF ILLINOIS WELFARE RECIPIENTS: JANUARY 1993 TO JANUARY 2002



DATA SOURCE: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

The recession has not helped, she adds, noting that, while Illinois has posted work rates as high as 70 percent, that has dropped to the minimum of 50 percent.

“Given the population we’re working with now, and if the barrier-reducing activities are not included as countable activities, then it’s going to be very, very difficult for all states to reach the outcomes.”

Arnold says Illinois wants to continue to receive block grants that allow maximum flexibility to pay for support programs, child care and other services to prepare recipients for work or support them when they find jobs. More broadly, she says, she wants lawmakers to understand that the state sees welfare as a “poverty reduction” program, one that has been a key way for government to address the ongoing economic recession.

Gary MacDougal, an architect of the state’s welfare system and a former state Republican Party chair, agrees. He headed the Governor’s Task Force for Human Services Reform from 1991 to 1997 and touts Illinois’ record as the second-most-successful state in percentage reduction of people on welfare: 86 percent since 1996, behind only Wyoming. This summer, MacDougal has been visiting senators in Washington, D.C., to discuss his views, which he also has outlined in his recent book, *Make A Difference*.

“I don’t see how all these delays [in rewriting the federal law] have hurt Illinois at all,” he says. “The Bush

Administration wants to crank up the work requirements. This is one place where I disagree with them.”

To MacDougal, the state’s success has come, in part, from the current requirement of just 20 hours of actual work per week. He calls it “a hugely valuable first step for someone who hasn’t worked before. Going to a 40-hour job might not be the best thing.”

MacDougal also isn’t a fan of the president’s push to fund marriage promotion programs, which he says probably won’t hurt but do not address the bigger issue: that many fathers

of welfare children have criminal convictions and few prospects, making them unattractive to potential wives. “That money is better spent on ex-offender programs,” MacDougal says.

Yet other states’ governors are urging Congress to get to work on the federal rewrite. In fact, the National Governors Association has taken a lead role in pushing for a new law sooner rather than later. That group predicts matters will only become more difficult for states the longer the stalemate drags on. Through then-chairman and former Michigan Gov. John Engler, a Republican, the NGA called last year for a bipartisan renewal of welfare. The urgency behind the request has only increased, says Matt Salo, director of the NGA’s Health and Human Services Committee, because the ballooning federal deficit threatens to wipe out Congress’ willingness to allocate new money for child care.

The Senate in March voted 78-20 to add \$6 billion annually for child care over the \$1 billion included in that chamber’s draft version. But Majority Leader Bill Frist, a Tennessee Republican, pulled the bill when Democrats tried to attach a minimum wage increase and a vote to end the debate failed.

Salo says the NGA wants to see the child care money included now because it fears the Bush plan will become law at some point anyway. “Those changes are going to happen. It’s no longer a question of, ‘Hey, we can enjoy these

### EXCERPT

#### *The two worlds of welfare reform in Illinois*

“The most recent data clearly show that whether the overall effect of welfare reform in Illinois is positive or negative depends on employment. ... For about one-half of the families in the study, employment in conjunction with work supports has led to increased earnings and greater independence. The other one-half, however, was not employed in 2003. Coupled with flat employment levels, the rising proportion of families who relied neither on work or [welfare] is disturbing.”

**Conservative scholar Robert Rector, a fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., says nothing is happening because little common ground exists on welfare reform.**

three-month extensions into infinity.' It's, 'The world is going to change.'"

A complete rewrite would give states three benefits, Salo says: certainty about the program through 2008, work requirements more in line with voter demands and the opportunity to win provisions to let them meet the new standards more gradually.

Yet the chances that Congress will pass a new law this year are slim, Salo says. "Politics is going to keep things from happening."

Indeed, early last month, House Majority Leader Tom DeLay, a Texas Republican, blamed "Democratic obstructionists" in the Senate for what likely will be another three-month continuation of the current law.

But Illinois Sen. Richard Durbin, a Democrat, says the debate is complicated by the weak economy. He calls Bush's work requirements "unrealistic" without more spending on child care and an increase in the minimum wage. "We have to be sensitive and humane in how we push welfare reform forward. And I must add, too, it's much more difficult to deal with welfare reform in the Bush Administration because we've lost so many jobs."

Conservative scholar Robert Rector, a fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., says nothing is happening because little common ground exists on welfare

reform. He notes that Democrats continue to defend the current system while 60 percent of mothers receiving cash welfare assistance are doing no work. "The rhetorical consensus that was reached in 1996 is still with us, but in substance it is completely dead and nailed in a coffin," he said at a recent Brookings Institution forum on Census Bureau estimates that show poverty is on the rise for the second straight year.

Underlying the stalemate, however, are very real policy differences. Deborah Cutler-Ortiz, director of the Family Income and Jobs Division at the Children's Defense Fund, says the Bush plan lacks a safety net for families. Her group wants a new law that helps address the reality that poverty is on the rise despite declining welfare rolls.

"People are not leaving welfare for work; they are just leaving welfare." A rewrite, she says, needs to provide money for child care, health care and transportation, not just raise work requirements.

"What you're telling people is, 'We don't care if you're in poverty, we just want you off the rolls.'"

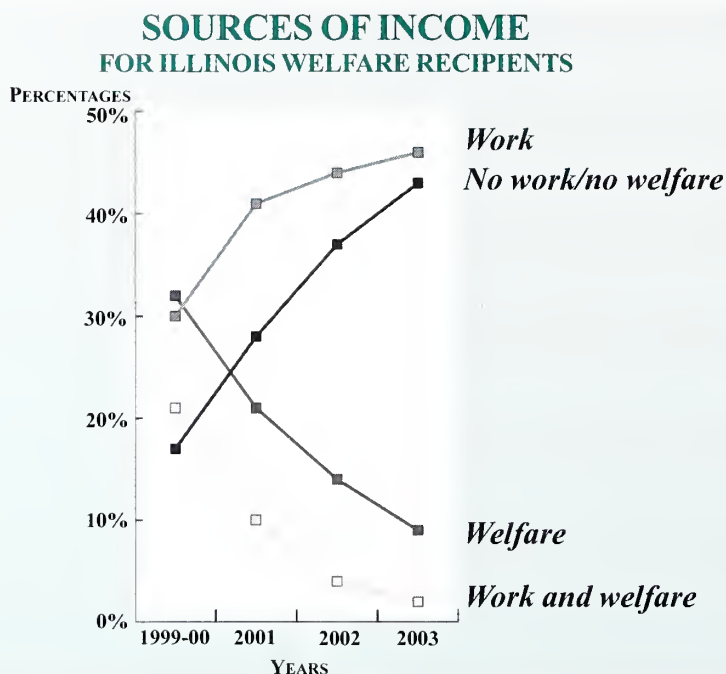
Margy Waller, who was a senior advisor at the White House Domestic Policy Council during the Clinton Administration, says rising poverty should force either the Bush or a Kerry Administration to draft new proposals that address poverty during a recession.

She contends that many welfare mothers are preparing for work, just not in ways that meet federal definitions. And she opposes the proposed work rules because, she says, they would force states to shift money to work programs from programs that help working families keep jobs.

"In a world of limited resources, why would we do something that there's no evidence would work? My concern is that in the long run we're sending false expectations about who's going to do what and when; we don't really need to do that."

Whatever provisions they settle on in a new federal welfare law, Congress is unlikely to address the issue this year, certainly not before the election. And that's fine with officials in Illinois. □

*Edward Felker is the Washington, D.C., bureau chief for Small Newspaper Group.*



SOURCE: Illinois Family Survey

#### PUBLIC TV STATIONS

WEIU  
Charleston

WILL  
Champaign

WMEC/WQEC/WSEC  
Macomb, Quincy  
Jacksonville/Springfield

WQPT  
Moline

WSIU  
Carbondale

WTVP  
Peoria

WUSI  
Olney

WYCC  
Chicago

#### PUBLIC RADIO STATIONS

WBEZ FM  
Chicago

WCBU FM  
Peoria

WDCB FM  
Glen Ellyn

WGLT FM  
Normal

WILL AM  
Urbana

WIUM/WIUW FM  
Macomb, Warsaw

WNIJ FM  
DeKalb, Rockford,  
Sterling, LaSalle, Freeport

WNIU FM  
Rockford, DeKalb

WSIE FM  
Edwardsville

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Springfield, Pittsfield



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# Three decades of public affairs journalism



*When the first edition of Illinois Issues came off the presses in January 1975, major changes in state governance were under way. Officials were busy meeting the requirements of the 1970 state Constitution, which was designed by its framers to pull Illinois into the modern era. The first state comptroller had been sworn in, and the first auditor general. The new State Board of Elections had just supervised its first campaign season. The new State Board of Education was in place. And the amending provision of the Constitution had had its first test run: Voters declined to overturn the governor's amendatory veto powers.*

*Yet over the years that followed, Illinoisans continued to wrestle with the policy and political changes wrought by the new Constitution — and those required by the courts, the voters and the state's evolving lineup of elected officials. Any assessment of these changes depends on perspective. But this much is certain: Illinois government and politics have changed in the past three decades. Illinois Issues is about to enter its fourth decade of publication, and next year we'll celebrate that achievement with a look forward. In the final months of this year, we'll take a look back at where we've been.*

The Editors

## Patronage rulings

*Illinois' tradition of political spoils drew scrutiny from the U.S. Supreme Court over the past three decades.*

*In 1976, the nation's high court ruled in Elrod v. Burns that making party allegiance, including work for candidates and money contributions, a condition of employment was impermissible because it could cause unwanted association or inhibit desired association. Party affiliation, the justices decided, may be required as a condition of government employment only at policymaking levels.*

*In 1990, in Rutan et al v. Republican Party of Illinois et al, the court called denial of promotion or transfer, failure to recall after layoff and rejection of initial hire "deprivations less harsh than dismissal that nevertheless press state employees and applicants to conform their beliefs and associations to some state-selected orthodoxy."*

*Critics saw the Rutan decision in particular as threatening the democratic process. The court observed that political parties were managing to survive and noted "the declining influence of election workers when compared to money-intensive campaigning, such*

*as the distribution of form letters and advertising."*

Contrary to the impression the rest of the country sometimes has, political patronage employment was not invented in Illinois. The spoils system was developed to a fine art there though, and has thrived longer than in most places. So it was fitting that the U.S. Supreme Court's constitutional examination of the practice of giving government jobs to political helpers should have originated in Cook County. In one of the more hazily reasoned decisions of its last term, the court found that the use of political patronage to fill nonpolicymaking public jobs violated the First Amendment rights of those payrollers who had the misfortune of actively supporting the candidate who lost. Every American's freedoms of political belief and association are protected equally by the Constitution, and that includes partisan soldiers of fortune, declared Justice William J. Brennan Jr. for the 5-to-3 majority.

Tom Littlewood, October 1976

An immediate effect was the issuance by Gov. Thompson on July 17 of Executive Order No. 1 (1990), strictly implementing the principles embodied

in Rutan. About the past it says, "It has been the policy and practice of this administration to fill positions in the state only with individuals who are qualified for their positions." Indeed, recommendations to the governor's office have been made from lists of those qualified under civil service regulations, but apparently the attitude has been, "All other things being equal, hire the Republican." Now the record of past party affiliation, activity and voting is not to be considered. The order does not prohibit recommendations for those seeking employment by party officials, but these must deal strictly with the candidate's qualifications for the job and not with party loyalty.

Anyone who lives in Springfield will have to wonder whether job dispensers will be able to ignore the known party affiliation of the recommenders — but at least the Republicans have stopped attaching application forms for party membership to job application forms.

F. Mark Siebert, August/September 1990

## Cutback Amendment

*In 1980, voters approved an amendment to the Illinois Constitution abolishing multimember districts in the House,*

along with the system of electing their representatives through cumulative voting. Under the old system, the minority party in each House district was able to elect one of the three representatives from that district. Republican-leaning districts could send one Democrat to Springfield. Democrat-leaning districts could send one Republican.

Given “the good government,” anti-party position of Patrick Quinn’s Coalition for Political Honesty and other reform groups supporting the Cutback Amendment, it is ironic that their amendment may actually strengthen the parties and undercut support for “good government” positions.

It could be argued, of course, that the minority representatives from each party tend to cancel out each other’s vote, but there can be no doubt that they do broaden the range of positions within their respective parties and, perhaps, influence party policy by moving it closer to the middle range of political opinion. Without minority party members, partisan polarization would be intensified, which, it could be said, might encourage the clarification of controversial issues. The question for voters is whether the presence of moderates and independents in both parties improves or diminishes the effectiveness of the House.

Robert B. Schaller, November 1980

## Judicial subdistricts

A 1990 law, supported by minority lawmakers and Republicans, carved 15 subdistricts out of Cook County for the purpose of electing circuit judges. The region also was divided into five appellate subdistricts. Though some circuit and appellate judges are still elected at-large in Cook County, supporters argued that enabling candidates to run from smaller districts would encourage partisan, gender and racial diversity on the bench.

When Llewellyn Greene-Thapedi, former president of the black lawyers’ Cook County Bar Association, went before the Chicago Bar Association’s

(CBA) judicial evaluation committee in 1987, she recalls the first words spoken in the room were about her past activism on behalf of minorities.

Greene-Thapedi, who had been in the leadership of the black bar association for several years, was trying to become an associate judge. These judges are selected by the sitting circuit judges of Cook County from a bar-endorsed list of candidates. Greene-Thapedi did not get the CBA endorsement, and she recalls that the committee never even asked about her legal qualifications. “When I think about the questions put to me, they were not about my abilities as a judge,” Greene-Thapedi says now. “They had to do with articles I’d written and statements I’d made on behalf of the Cook County Bar Association to the effect that there must be more blacks on the judiciary.”

• • •

While blacks and Hispanics and some women are celebrating what they view as new access to the judiciary, proponents of merit selection remain vehemently opposed to the new law. Jeffrey Gilbert, president of the Chicago

Council of Lawyers (CCL), called the law “the judicial patronage act” in a point-of-view column written for the *Chicago Tribune*. The CCL put together a coalition for merit selection called Citizens for Court Reform that urged Gov. James R. Thompson not to sign the bill into law.

Those who have called for merit selection in the past are making dire predictions about the effect of the new law. Said the court reform coalition’s director, Donna Schiller, “Every lawyer in the subdistricts will be responsible for giving [campaign] money to the elected judge. It just gives me nightmares.” Said Gilbert, “I still feel that in smaller districts, the weight of the delivered vote will be all the heavier. It’s already the case that few people vote for judge as compared to races at the top of the ticket. People who vote for judge are voting the party recommendation. They are the ones holding the precinct captain’s list.”

Gilbert believes the passage of the subdistricting bill has put off “for a generation” any chance of merit selection becoming a reality in Illinois.

Nina Burleigh, February 1990

## Political personae

*The richness of Illinois’ political narrative is rooted in its roster of players. This was true over the past three decades as a shifting cast of characters stepped into the spotlight. Here, from our pages, are a few of the early reviews.*

**Phyllis Schlafly** Mrs. Schlafly calls American women, without the ERA, “the luckiest and most privileged in the world. It is a wonderful right that a wife be provided with a home by her husband. There are always going to be women,” she said, “who can sweet-talk their husbands into doing nice things for them. But they would have no legal rights [to support] under the ERA.”

William McFadin, March 1975

**Donald Rumsfeld** His incomparable managerial experience, determination, and an awareness of the importance of image in politics that has always been ahead of his time almost guarantee that Don Rumsfeld won’t quietly fade away.

Tom Littlewood, June 1977

**Harold Washington** Race was key in this campaign — for it would not be difficult to argue that if Harold Washington were white he would not have entered let alone won the 1983 Chicago Democratic mayoral primary.

Paul M. Green, April 1983

**James Heiple** A profoundly conservative jurist from downstate Pekin, he is the embodiment of what populists and “small-d” democrats hate about the judiciary — aloof, often arrogant and virtually unaccountable.

Toby Eckert, March 1995

## State rep indicted



Patricia Bailey

State Rep. **Patricia Bailey**'s Democratic primary opponents — including ex-Death Row convict **Aaron Patterson** — accused her of living outside the district she ran to represent. Now Attorney General Lisa Madigan is making the same allegation and has indicted Bailey on charges of perjury and mutilation of election materials.

Bailey wasn't living in the 6th Illinois House district when she filed her statement of candidacy for re-election from there, according to the indictment. The indictment also alleges that Bailey falsified a March primary election document by reporting that she lived in the 6th District

at 4538 South Hermitage, #1R, in Chicago.

"This indictment alleges a serious breach of the public trust," Madigan said in a prepared statement. "Voters who voted for or considered voting for Ms. Bailey believed that she lived in the 6th District. Such alleged conduct is unethical and illegal."

The *Chicago Tribune* reported that Bailey appeared to be living at her mother's home, which is outside of the district.

Perjury and mutilation of election materials are both felonies, punishable by as much as five years in prison on the perjury count alone. If she's convicted, Bailey would have to step down from the legislature and could not serve as a public employee for five years after she's completed her sentence.

A judge in August declined to remove Bailey from the November general election ballot, saying that the challenge to her address came too late. She does not have a Republican opponent.

## Historic agency has new director

**Robert Coomer Jr.** now heads the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Former Director **Maynard Crossland** turned in his resignation effective August 31 but offered no reason for the decision.

Crossland, who had served in that position for more than two years, joined the agency at its inception in 1985. Prior to that, he worked for the Illinois State Historical Library.

Coomer has been head of the agency's historic sites division since 1985.

## Regional superintendent, wife, staffers indicted

**Barry Kohl**, regional superintendent of schools for the Franklin/Williamson office, was indicted on charges of theft, forgery, conspiracy, official misconduct and perjury.

The indictments stem from a year-and-a-half-long investigation by Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office into allegations that Kohl and his wife **Janine Kohl**, an office employee, falsified travel vouchers and received reimbursement for personal expenses. Other accusations claim the Kohls committed perjury in the grand jury when testifying about those vouchers and that they solicited two other regional education office employees to commit perjury in a coverup scheme.

The investigation began after Illinois Auditor General William Holland last year referred his audit findings to Madigan's office.

"These indictments detail a serious violation of the public trust by public employees," Madigan said in a prepared statement. "We allege that Barry Kohl was filing false vouchers even after my office began its investigation. This abuse of taxpayer dollars is unethical and criminal."

Specific charges against Janine Kohl include theft, conspiracy, forgery, official misconduct and perjury. Employees **Mary Ann Adams** and **Suzanne Willmore** were charged with perjury.

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## QUOTABLES

*The U.S. Senate race between Democrat Barack Obama and Republican Alan Keyes has been among the more quotable in recent years. Here is a sampling.*

“If we embrace homosexuality as a proper basis for marriage, we are saying that it is possible to have a marriage state that in principle excludes procreation and is based simply on the premise of selfish hedonism. This is unacceptable.”

*Keyes explaining his opposition to gay marriage at the Republican National Convention during an August 31 interview with Sirius OutQ, a national gay and lesbian news program available via satellite radio. When asked if he then considers Mary Cheney, Vice President Dick Cheney's homosexual daughter, a selfish hedonist, Keyes said, "Of course she is. That goes by definition. Of course she is."*

“I think it's nasty, and I don't like nasty politics. You don't pick on people's kids. Kids are off limits.”

*State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka, chairwoman of the Illinois Republican Party, as quoted in the Chicago Tribune, responding to Keyes' statements. She further described the remarks as "idiotic."*

“Selfish hedonism? Has anyone seen Dr. Keyes look at a microphone or a television camera? That's hedonism.”

*Rick Garcia, director of the gay rights group Equality Illinois, as quoted in the Chicago Tribune, responding to Keyes' comments.*

“I'm not going to lie to you. I'm going to win this election. I don't want to just win. I want to give this guy who is running against me a spanking. The reason I do is because he exemplifies the kind of scorched earth, slash-and-burn negative campaign that has become the custom in Washington and it is the reason why we can't get anything done.”

*Obama during a downstate appearance, responding to Keyes' negative comments about Obama, as quoted in The Southern Illinoisan.*

“Christ would not vote for Barack Obama because Barack Obama has voted to behave in a way that it is inconceivable for Christ to have behaved.”

*Keyes at a Chicago press conference meant to call attention to Obama's "spanking" comment, as quoted in the Chicago Tribune. Keyes made the assertion based on his opponent's support for abortion rights.*

“It's amazing how he's the only one that can talk about Jesus Christ. He has a telephone connection right to him. It's laughable, really. It's sad.”

*Chicago Mayor Richard Daley talking to reporters about Keyes' claim that Jesus would not vote for Obama. Daley made the remark during an unrelated news conference, as reported by The Associated Press. Daley joked that he was unaware of any endorsement made by Jesus.*

## New state ed board

**Jesse Ruiz**, a Chicago lawyer and Democrat who served as chief counsel to the Legislative Latino Caucus, took over as chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education last month when Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed legislation allowing him to reshape the board. Among the departing members is former chairman Ron Gidwitz, a Chicago Republican and a frequent critic of Blagojevich.

The governor named six others to the nine-member panel, including **Brenda Holmes**, who, as his education adviser, helped Blagojevich push the legislation. Holmes serves as a Springfield independent. The five others are: **Andrea Brown**, a Goreville Republican and former teacher; **David Fields**, a Danville independent and former district administrator; **Ed Geppert**, a Belleville Democrat and former chief of staff for the Illinois Federation of Teachers; and **Chris Ward**, a Lockport Democrat and former superintendent of the township's high school district.

They join **Dean Clark**, a Glen Ellyn Republican, and **Joyce Karon**, a Barrington Democrat.

## Gaming panel exits

Chairman **Elzie Higginbottom** stepped down from the Illinois Gaming Board, as did member **Violet Clark**. The Ryan appointees' terms had expired at the end of June.

The resignations of Higginbottom, Chicago businessman, and Clark, a Chicago attorney, left the board without a quorum. As of mid-September, the governor had yet to name replacements.

## ○ BITS

### Lutrelle "Lu" Palmer

The activist and journalist died September 12, 2004. He was 82.

His journalism career included stints at the *Chicago Defender*, the *Chicago Daily News* and Chicago's WVON radio. He founded the Black Independent Political Organization and Chicago Black United Communities. He also coined, "We shall see in '83," the slogan that helped elect Harold Washington as Chicago's mayor.

## LETTERS

### Evidence shows big cats survive in Illinois

Ample evidence has been found over the last 50 years to indicate the existence of several big cats, commonly called cougar or mountain lion in Illinois (see *Illinois Issues*, July/August, page 23).

Contrary to popular belief, approximately 45 percent of sightings are made by qualified witnesses, with backgrounds in law enforcement, forestry or wildlife. Another 8 percent of eyewitnesses are scientists in fields of the earth sciences, which leaves little room for doubt that wild cougars do survive in the state.

Pets kept by private owners are licensed and monitored on a regular basis by various state and federal agencies. So when one turns up missing, the owner can be charged with releasing his/her pet.

It should be noted, not one pet cougar has ever been found to have escaped its cage at a private residence or zoo in Illinois over the last 25 years. Pet

cougars are usually declawed and, in many cases, lack some teeth, which severely limits their ability to hunt or catch wild game.

These conditions would spell death to the predator in short order. Yet not one body of a pet cougar has ever been found in Illinois in the last 25 years. The only body found was of a wild cougar in Randolph county in 2000. It had been struck and killed by a train. An autopsy concluded: "It showed only evidence of being wild."

We often wonder why state wildlife agencies are always trying to convince residents that any cougar found in the state is a "released/escaped" pet, when final evidence proves otherwise.

The Eastern Puma Research Network has a qualified science-based staff of professionals always "on call" for identification purposes.

**John Lutz**  
*Eastern Puma Research Network*

*Illinois Issues* has been receiving numerous reports of cougar sightings. If you see one, let us know.



### Write us

Your comments are welcome.  
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Charles N. Wheeler III



## Public confidence in the judiciary goes down as campaign rhetoric gets nastier

by Charles N. Wheeler III

**I**s justice for sale in Illinois? A lot of people think so. That worries folks like Cindi Canary, and it ought to worry all of us.

"I think there's a growing perception that's the case," says Canary, director of the Illinois Campaign for Political Reform. "In 2002, people expressed a lot of concern about conflicts of interest, about the players in the campaign ending up being the players in the courtroom."

At the heart of such apprehension is candidates' growing reliance on special interests to pick up the increasing costs of judicial campaigns, an arrangement that understandably leads citizens to suspect a link between campaign contributions and judicial rulings.

A statewide poll taken just before the last election, for example, found that 86 percent of the respondents believed campaign contributions influence judicial decisions, a third of them "a lot." Moreover, only 16 out of 830 registered voters saw no influence at all. Nor are Illinoisans especially cynical; a national poll commissioned last year by Justice at Stake, a nonpartisan court reform group, found nearly 72 percent believed campaign money influences judges' decisions.

While such suspicions may not be warranted, it's not surprising they've found fertile ground in voters' minds.

Between 1996 and 2000, the amount of money raised in state Supreme Court campaigns across the country more than doubled, according to researchers for

---

*A statewide poll taken just before the last election found that 86 percent of the respondents believed campaign contributions influence judicial decisions, a third of them "a lot."*

Justice at Stake. In 2002, 10 candidates for the highest state court raised more than \$1 million for their election campaigns, the group reported.

Much of the money comes from donors with a vested interest in court rulings. Business groups and doctors' associations want judges who'll be sympathetic to their concerns about the cost of environmental regulation and the size of malpractice awards. Trial lawyers and organized labor want jurists sensitive to injured people and to downtrodden workers.

Consider the million-dollar race that occurred in central Illinois in 2002. Republican Justice Rita Garman spent almost \$1.1 million to retain the 4th District high court seat to which she was appointed when Republican Justice Ben Miller retired. Her Democratic challenger, Appellate Justice Sue

Myerscough, spent \$841,000 in a losing bid. Add in the \$284,000 spent by an unsuccessful GOP primary candidate, and the total cost of the election neared \$2.2 million.

Both candidates enjoyed considerable financial help from their respective parties, but Garman also benefited heavily from business and medical groups interested in tort reform, while Myerscough had strong union support.

But the money the two candidates spent was small potatoes compared to the outlays in high court races two years earlier: Candidates in the northern Illinois 2nd District booked more than \$3.5 million in spending, while 1st District (Cook County) candidates spent \$2.5 million in the Democratic primary. In the 3rd District in north-central Illinois, meanwhile, court hopefuls spent almost \$2 million.

Only one high court spot — in the 5th District — is on the ballot this year, and court watchers expect campaign costs again to exceed \$1 million. Vying are Washington County Circuit Judge Lloyd Karmeier, a Republican, and Appellate Justice Gordon Maag, a Democrat. Through June, Karmeier reported taking in some \$347,000 since last September, while Maag garnered some \$202,000 during the same period. The fundraising pace is likely to pick up as election day draws near; the big money typically floods in late.

The contest also pits some of the state's most powerful special interests in a bitter battle over how personal injury and

medical malpractice suits should be handled. The state Chamber of Commerce, the Illinois State Medical Society and other groups wanting limits on jury awards and class-action suits are with Karmeier. Trial lawyers and unions are for Maag.

So what's the fuss? Doesn't the business community generally support Republican candidates, expecting them to be pro-business? Doesn't organized labor usually back Democratic hopefuls for similar reasons? Isn't that how electoral politics is supposed to work?

Indeed, the genius of representative democracy is that the citizenry can choose leaders who reflect their concerns and share their agendas — lawmakers who will pass bills attuned to constituent's wishes and executives who will enforce policies the majority wants. And if the popular will is thwarted, kick the rascals out!

Judges, though, are fundamentally different from other elected officials. A judge's role is to be a fair and impartial arbiter of society's conflicts, guided only by the law and the Constitution. In fact, judicial canons forbid candidates for the

---

***Moreover, it's not just  
the huge sums required  
to wage a high court  
race that bothers reformers;  
it's also the way the  
money is spent.***

bench from expressing opinions on matters likely to come before them, although a 2002 U.S. Supreme Court ruling has undercut that prohibition. Still, a judge's only constituent is the rule of law; he or she is beholden to the Constitution, not public opinion.

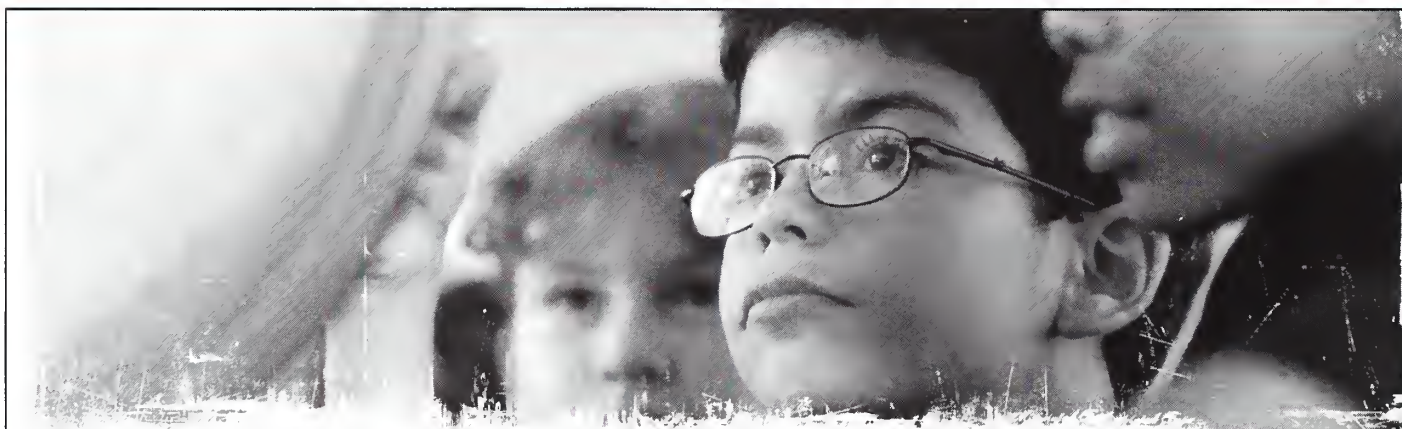
Moreover, it's not just the huge sums required to wage a high court race that bothers reformers; it's also the way the money is spent. All too frequently the same sort of attack ads and negative mailings used against legislative or executive branch candidates appear in judicial races. As the rhetoric gets

nastier, public confidence in the judiciary gets dragged down.

As an antidote, some reformers say that judges, particularly at the supreme and appellate levels, should be appointed. But that notion is a non-starter in Illinois, where polls show overwhelming public support for an elected judiciary, mirroring national sentiment.

To break the elected-vs.-appointed impasse, the American Bar Association in 2002 called for public financing of state Supreme Court campaigns. The Illinois Senate approved such a plan last year, but the measure stalled in a House committee. Under its terms, candidates who agree to forgo other fundraising could receive up to \$750,000 from a special fund fed by income tax checkoffs and contributions. The estimated price tag — perhaps \$3 million in a busy year — seems a small price to pay to dispel the cloud of suspicion the current, free-wheeling fundraising practices engender. □

*Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.*



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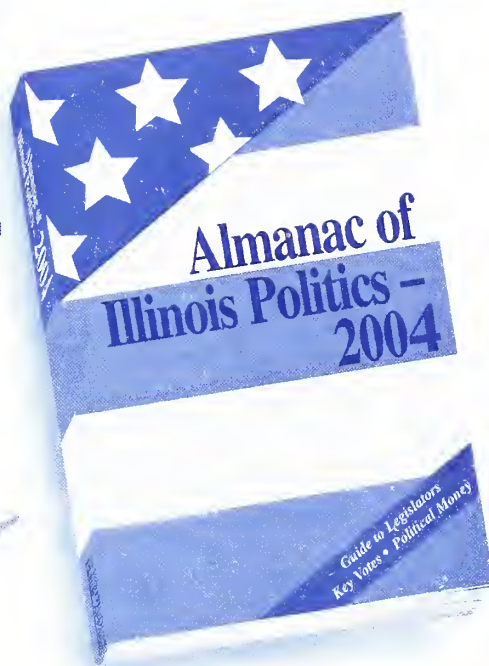
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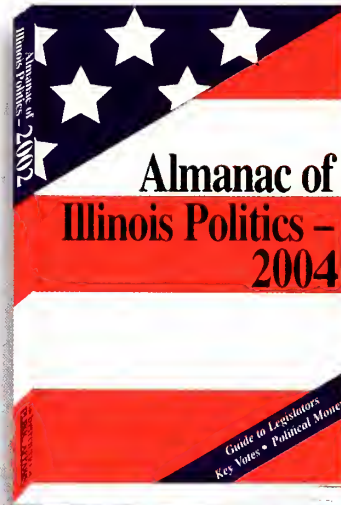
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